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JOAN OF ARC



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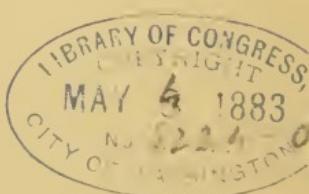




# JOAN OF ARC.

BY  
J. S. FOOTE.  
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BOSTON:  
CHARLES H. WHITING, PUBLISHER,  
32 BROMFIELD STREET.  
1883.



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## JOAN OF ARC.

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O, wondrous maid ! Let him beware  
Who calls thee witch, and e'en declare  
Himself thy judge on bended knees  
Before that throne no mortal sees.

Proud France, whose annals glory bore,  
By factions torn, was France no more.  
Her sunny, vine-clad, fruitful lands  
Had fallen into English hands ;  
Her subjects stood, from hour to hour,  
In mortal fear of England's power ;  
Her feeble king was king in name ;  
Her fearless nobles lived in shame ;  
Her wretched peasants, doomed to feel  
The base, aristocratic heel,  
Down-trodden, plunged, they knew not where,  
Into the depths of deep despair.  
And here, as Hell's tormenting darts  
Transfixed their fainting, bleeding hearts,  
They cried with each distressing breath  
For mercy from the god of Death.

Their earnest pray'rs, their bitter cries,  
Unlocked the portals of the skies,  
And from Jehovah's throne above  
Descended liberty and love ;  
For in the greatness of His power  
He blessed them at this dreadful hour.  
He chose, not thunder-bolt and hail,  
To make the tyrants cow'r and quail ;  
But, like His dear and only Son,  
He chose the simplest, weakest one, —  
A little child — a feeble spark —  
Immortal flame — Joan of Arc.  
Such were the miseries and woes  
That darkened France, when there arose,  
To cause a ray of light divine  
Through the appalling gloom to shine,  
The peasant of Lorraine, whose lance  
Preserved her king and country — France.  
Her childish life, her sweetest hours,  
Were spent among the birds and flowers.  
By these instructors she was taught,  
And from them views of Heaven caught.  
Her mother knew not how to read,  
But knew far more : knew how to plead  
With Him above who sits alone  
And governs Empires from His throne.  
So, with a mother's fervent zeal,  
The little one was taught to kneel.

What better training could there be  
To mould and shape her destiny  
Than mother's fond, devoted care  
And simple, solemn, earnest prayer?  
Now as she reached her maiden state,  
Admiring youth at ev'ry gate  
Stood watching with those dreamy eyes,  
Which lovers use to win their prize,  
For her bewitching, lovely face  
Which had no equal in its grace.  
But no ; her nature never yields  
To blandishments which Cupid wields.  
Her ardent love, that love's desire  
Inspired by God's eternal fire,  
Burned for her mother, country, king,  
For happiness that peace would bring.  
While others played without a care,  
Her soul was pouring out in prayer.  
Her new delights could now be found  
In nature's grandeur, deep, profound.  
She loved the mountain, hill, and vale,  
The sunshine, shadow, breeze, and gale.  
She loved the brook, the lake, the sea ;  
She loved the birds so light and free ;  
She loved the forest, trees, and rocks ;  
She loved the happy, grazing flocks ;  
She loved the stars, the moon, the sun ;  
She loved the flowers ev'ry one.

Her daily custom was to go  
And sit beneath the trees and sew.  
This spot she sought with great delight,  
Because it brought within her sight  
The distant mountain on whose crest  
The heavy clouds, retiring, rest ;  
The little church where daily pray'rs  
Release her from her sinful cares ;  
The clear, blue sky which seemed to tell  
Where spirits found a place to dwell,—  
This trio bound her to the spot  
As if it were her happy lot  
To meet the angels here alone  
And learn of things unseen, unknown.  
One day, at noon, while waiting there  
To meet her playmates of the air ;  
While gazing into azure skies  
A voice cried out : “ Joan, arise !  
Go to thy king ! His crown restore !  
And make him king of France once more ! ”  
She, trembling, on her knees, replied :  
“ Forgive me ! I am young, untried.  
The bloody fight, the dying groans,  
The sobs, the tears, the gasping moans,  
The awful scenery of death  
That chills the blood, arrests the breath,—  
From these my timid soul would fly  
And cry in anguish : ‘ How can I ? ’ ”

But soon there came a reprimand :  
“ Go ! child ! Fear not ! ’Tis my command !  
Proceed at once your king to save  
And France to rescue from her grave !  
Fear not ! For all the saintly host  
Will guard thee to the uttermost !”  
Now when this summons died away  
And left the maiden to obey,  
The strong emotions of her mind,  
As if in agony confined,  
Turned pale her face and made each nerve  
A trembling vassal fear to serve.  
But still the voice more strong and clear  
Behind her back was drawing near.  
“ It comes !” she cried ; “ yes ; nearer ! Oh !  
What shall I do ? Where shall I go ?”  
She looked around. There stood the saint  
With proffered sword, without complaint.  
“ Fear not !” he said ; “ the saintly host  
Will guard thee to the uttermost.”  
Upon her trembling knees she fell  
Before this mystic sentinel.  
Then as she knelt and upward gazed  
And eyes suffused with tears were raised  
To Heaven, with one despairing cry,  
She said : “ O, Father ! Let me die !”  
But no ; her mission was not done ;  
Nor were her splendid laurels won.

Transcendent eulogies unsaid  
Remained for her, the martyred dead.  
Then she arose confused, distressed,  
And sought, but sought in vain, for rest.  
Tormented by an inward fear  
Of sinful disobedience here,  
She prayed that, in this awful hour,  
She might receive some guiding power :  
“ My God ! what shall I do ! I pray,  
Shall I the strange command obey ?  
Direct me ! O, Omniscient One !  
It is my will that thine be done.”  
At length, like some frail, tiny boat  
On ocean’s waters set afloat,  
Or as a ship without a sail  
Before a stormy, wintry gale  
Storm-tossed and wrenched by mountain wave,  
Unharbored, helmless, yet still brave,  
Seeks some unruffled, peaceful tide  
Where sweet relief and joy abide,—  
So she sought rest from her alarms  
And found it in her mother’s arms.  
But even mother’s fond embrace  
With tender love and smiling face,  
Although they were so long delayed  
And sweetly, too, they only made,  
Her anxious, longing, pray’rful soul  
Yearn for its aim beyond control.

What solace can there be for one  
When conscience finds his work not done !  
Resolved at last to meet her fate,  
She told her father, friends, and mate,  
And soon report had spread it far,  
That Joan was to lead in war.  
Some called her crazy ; others, mad ;  
Some dared to praise her and be glad ;  
Some called her witch, and so desired  
That she be punished, not admired.  
All criticized that wondrous plan  
Which made her sorceress, or man.  
Her aged father, much displeased,  
Declared his daughter's mind diseased ;  
That vain delusions had control  
Of body, mind, of heart and soul ;  
And lifting up his feeble voice  
He said : "It is my solemn choice  
That she should die this very hour,  
Than serve that fatal, evil pow'r.  
I know I'm old, and childish too,  
I know that life is well nigh through,  
I know that death's dark waters flow  
Close by my door ; ah ! yes, I know  
That soon my wearied feet shall tread  
The smoother pathways of the dead.  
Earth's brightest hope is my dear child,  
My precious girl, so sweet, so mild ;

The solace of my bending years,  
The light that drives away the tears.  
And should I see her now depart  
To fight, O, God ! 'twould break my heart !  
No, no ; no, no ; this must not be !  
She is too dear, too dear to me !  
But should she heed me not, I swear  
This base injustice I'll not bear,—  
I vow to break Divine commands  
And take her life with my own hands !”  
But father's threats and mother's tears  
Could not subdue religious fears ;  
For Heaven's voice she must obey  
Regardless of what others say.  
At length she found to take her part  
An uncle in whose tender heart  
Sweet consolation ever lives  
To ease the pain which sorrow gives.  
He took her to his home as nurse  
To shield her from her father's curse.  
Renewed endeavors now she made  
To get the royal captain's aid.  
She urged her uncle quick to fly  
To Vaucouleurs, and there to try  
The captain's favor to obtain,  
Before she sought the king's domain.  
Her uncle on his mission went  
And sought the captain's full consent.

The captain smiled and said : “Take care ;  
The girl is mad ; tell her— beware !  
Chastise her well and send her back  
To mother’s arms before the rack,  
The scaffold, stake, or prison bars  
Subdue her wild desire for wars.”

Disheartened, home her uncle turned  
And bore the news, which Joan spurned.  
Resolved that cowardly retreat  
Should not her purposes defeat ;  
She cried : “ ‘Tis Heaven’s high decree  
That you should now return with me,  
And we the captain will implore  
To give a hearing, if no more.”

Her uncle on her then bestowed  
The kind protection which he owed.  
Clad in an humble peasant dress,  
Her motto : “ Peace and Righteousness,”  
They then began their tedious tramp  
To Vaucouleurs, the captain’s camp.  
Now when they reached their journey’s end,  
Though warmly welcomed by a friend  
That chance and time they might not waste,  
They sought the captain’s camp in haste.  
Her earnest prayer, her firm request,  
Her strong desire, her high behest,  
Her solemn vow, her plea sincere,  
All fell upon the captain’s ear.

At length, in accents much subdued,  
Like one with sympathy imbued,  
“Speak on, my child,” he said, “but know  
'T is pity, and not fear I show.”  
A silent pause, a sweet prelude  
To her petition now ensued,  
And then like one excelling man  
With firmer voice she thus began :  
“ Sir ! in the name of God, whose throne  
O'er empires, nations, worlds unknown,  
Extends and ever shall remain  
Till time's eternal, endless chain  
Revolves no more, — to you I bring  
This message from Creation's King :  
Go to your king and him command  
To give no battle, till I stand  
Equipped with God's eternal might  
To put his enemy to flight.  
He shall be king, and France shall see  
The glory of his victory.  
Proceed, I say, for God on High  
With awful wrath commands, not I.  
Tell him my duty will be done  
When he is crowned and vict'ry won.”  
Thus spoke the maid. This great command  
The captain could not understand,  
Her manner was of strange import,  
Incomprehensible. The Court

Of High, Eternal Heaven could be  
No more exact in its decree.  
He bade the maiden to withdraw  
That he might seek advice at law ;  
A strange emotion filled his mind  
As if some phantom close behind  
Pursued him with its noiseless tread,  
And chiding, haunting, never fled.  
Distressed, he knew not what to say,  
So to the clergy made his way ;  
This holy council, which professed  
Supernal wisdom, thus addressed  
The captain : " Sir, if you admit  
That God exists and rules, submit  
To His Divine command, although  
Why He so acts you may not know.  
Did he not save the world through man ?  
Then question not His mode or plan.  
If He should choose to rescue France  
It matters not who bears the lance."  
This wise reply the captain heard,  
But thought, of course, it was absurd.  
The curate also was employed  
In priestly garments unalloyed.  
He viewed the case and could but find  
That God or Satan ruled her mind  
And calling her, said in this wise :  
" Young maid, the captain you surprise.

If God has called thee, heed the voice ;  
If Satan, woe be to your choice ! ”  
A low obeisance then she made  
And smiled, no longer now afraid.  
“ ‘T is God ! ’t is God ! ” she cried aloud.  
“ France finds a king, her foe a shroud ! ”  
Back to the captain then she went  
And said : “ Good sir, before mid-Lent  
I see the king and tell him all,  
Though on my knees to him I crawl.  
What God commands, dare not defy !  
Take me to Chinon — ask not why ! ”  
Two knights had listened to the maid  
And, deeply moved, arose and said :  
“ With God’s assistance we do swear  
To take you to the royal chair.”  
The captain then gave his consent  
Although afraid he might repent.  
The town of Vaucouleurs obtained  
A horse for Joan, finely trained ;  
Also a military dress,—  
Slight tokens of her worthiness.  
The captain gave her, too, a sword  
And sent her off with friendly word.  
And thus equipped they took their way  
To Chinon without long delay.  
Meanwhile the king and courtiers armed,  
'Gainst Joan’s actions were alarmed.

Some counsellors with gestures wild  
Advised the king to spurn the child,  
As though despatched by Satan's will  
To victimize, and hades fill.  
And others urged at great expense  
Of ev'rything but common sense  
That all such sacreligious things  
Need oracle or priests, not kings.  
The ladies of the court were proud  
To think that France might be allowed  
To choose a savior, through God's plan,  
From womankind instead of man ;  
And so, elated, they believed  
That Joan ought to be received.  
Prevailed upon at last by fear,  
The king replied : " Let her appear !  
But I will put her to a test  
To see if she be cursed or blest.  
I will this day at court presume  
The dress of courtiers to assume  
And mingle with that common throng  
To which a king does not belong.  
Then let the maid select her king  
From out this complex gathering.  
If she be God-inspired I know  
That through disguise my blood will show :  
But if inspired by Satan, then  
She 'll know me not from other men."

This plan devised, the king retired  
To court in courtier's dress attired.  
The courtiers, king, and noblemen  
Were there in full attendance, when  
Joan appeared with timid blush  
That caused an unexpected hush.  
By pomp, and court, and dress, confused  
She stood at first, as though accused  
Of some foul crime which called her there,  
To guilty, or not guilty, swear.  
But lest her aim they might defeat  
And call her an impostor, cheat,  
Her fleeting courage she recalled,  
And stood undaunted, unappalled.  
Among the throng with timid glance  
She sought her king — the king of France.  
No king's apparel could she see  
In all that august company.  
But all at once, though dense the crowd,  
She recognized the king and bowed.  
And ere she could lift up her head  
To call him king, he calmly said :  
“I am not king, young maid, ’t is he  
Who yonder stands ; select not me.”  
“I speak,” she said, “what I believe ;  
Thou art the king ; let none deceive!”  
Then added in a solemn voice :  
“Most noble one of Heaven’s choice,

The King of Kings, as best it seems,  
Declares you shall be crowned at Rheims  
And over France shall reign unharmed  
In spite of your oppressors armed.  
And more : God will not me release  
Till you are crowned and France at peace.”  
These words prophetic, strange, and grand  
Stood king and court as by command  
In awe of this great Magistrate  
Ordained by Heaven’s high mandate.  
The king then talked with her about  
A secret which put him in doubt,  
As to his proper, lawful right  
To take the King’s crown if he might.  
“Am I, or am I not, the heir  
To hold by right the royal chair ?  
Was Charles the Sixth my lawful Sire,  
Or was I born of Hell’s desire ?  
Pray tell me this, dispel my gloom  
And save me from eternal doom.”  
The maid replied : “ Most worthy one,  
I tell thee that thou art the son  
Of Charles the Sixth, and God on high  
Reveals it to me from the sky.  
Most gracious king, if thou wilt give  
Me soldiers thou shalt surely live  
To see our country safe, unharmed,  
Thyself its King, thy foe disarmed.”

Thus was the maid, severely tried  
Found equal to the test applied.  
Soon Rumor, like a spark of fire  
To tinder set, or like a crier  
Whose business 'tis, with hurried breath,  
To spread the news of life and death,  
Ran through the town, o'er field and hill,  
Till ev'ry heart was made to thrill.  
Her consultation with the chief,  
The court's respect for her belief,  
The knights' entreaties strong but kind,  
The people's clamor,— all combined,  
Made Joan's mission almost seem  
Like some prophetic, awful dream  
Which none but gods could understand ;  
But which was her Divine command.  
She thus became a brilliant star  
Which shone through blackened clouds of war.  
Excitement now became so strong  
That people round the maid would throng  
And make the very air to ring  
With shouts : “ God bless the Maid and king ! ”  
Some gave her steeds of war superb  
And taught her how their might to curb ;  
Some gave her swords which none excel,  
And taught her how to use them well.  
Sustained by God, equipped by man,  
She stood prepared to lead the van.

But, though she had the means and will  
For war, one thing was needed still.  
This was the king's consent to fight,  
For France, for King, for God, for Right.  
The king, with anxious eyes upraised,  
Walked back and forth as if half-crazed.  
Sweet sleep did not a visit pay,  
So worried was he night and day.  
His constant thought, his daily prayer,  
Were for release from this great care.  
Till finally with firm resolve  
This haunting mystery to solve,  
He told the maid : "At once prepare  
To meet the Doctors and to swear  
That you were sent with sword and lance  
To crown me king, to rescue France.  
You will be questioned close, severe,—  
And if you fail you shall appear  
Before a bar of justice where  
Its condemnation you shall bear."

At this decision Joan drew  
A sigh of sadness, for she knew  
What trials she must undergo  
To learn what Doctors think they know.  
But nerved to meet, at once, her fate,  
She set out for the learned gate.  
In presence of the Doctors, she  
First bowed with simple modesty.

The whitened locks, the wrinkled brows,  
The measured steps, the stately bows,  
The sunken eyes, the beards of snow,  
The aged shoulders stooping low,  
The awful mystery profound,  
Where knowledge, wisdom, skill abound,  
The solemn, tomb-like, dreadful air,  
Which drives one almost to despair,  
All met the trembling maiden's eye,—  
And made her shrink with fear; yes, cry.  
But all this vapory display  
Which gives men titles, fades away,  
When once the light of truth Divine  
Is made upon their works to shine:  
As when men meet beyond death's veil,  
True worth, not titles, will prevail.  
And thus in cold, unfeeling tone,  
The Doctors quizzed her, one by one:  
“Joan,” said one, “if God decreed  
That France be saved, why does he need  
A victory on battlefield  
By soldiers armed with sword and shield?  
If Sun, and Moon, and Stars, and Earth,  
Just from command received their birth,  
Why does Jehovah aid implore  
From you, a child, and nothing more?”  
“Most honored sir, do I mistake?  
Dispute makes wars, wars battles make;

Battles need soldiers, soldiers fight,  
The fight gives vict'ry to the right.  
Who is right, God alone decides,  
Hence victory with God abides."

Another said : " Precocious child,  
Let not sanctity be defiled ;  
If you can give no other sign  
Of revelation called Divine,  
The king indeed cannot entrust  
You with his army. This you must  
Remember, trifle not with things  
Concerning nations, crowns, or kings."

" Most honored and respected one,  
Through whom God's business here is done,  
'T is not to you that I am sent  
To show some sign of God's intent ;  
Take me, I pray, with soldiers few,  
To Orleans, and you never knew  
A grander sign than I will show,  
Of God's omnipotence below."

At last, a third prophetic sage  
Stepped forth, and questioned her with rage :  
" Young, foolish child," he said, with looks  
Of sternness, " we consult our books,  
And they most rigidly denounce  
Such wild delusions, and pronounce  
Tormenting death to one who dares  
To deal with such Satanic snares.

Beware ! lest this, your mighty strife,  
Should terminate your childish life."

The maid replied with earnest voice :  
" The Book of Books is my sweet choice.  
You read the works of man's device :  
Consult the Book of Paradise.

What I can do myself is small —  
What I can do through God, is all."

The doctors shook their heads, as though  
Just what to say they did not know.  
Confused, confounded, they withdrew  
To find out what they really knew  
Concerning God's great plans and acts  
Which they were thought to know as facts.  
They felt that they were humble, meek,  
That they were men, and, like men, weak.  
All points considered, they returned  
Much wiser, if not better learned.

They answered, with a gracious nod :  
" All things are possible with God.

Great acts through mortals He performs,  
He calms the winds, He quells the storms,  
He rears the dead, the sick He heals,  
He conquers nations, yet conceals  
All but the instruments employed :  
Why, then, should man be so annoyed ?  
The power of God is better known,  
When through great weakness it is shown.

The child may be an instrument  
Of His all-wise, supreme intent.”  
Such verdict, therefore, was returned  
By this wise council now adjourned.  
Now, when these words the king had heard,  
No more he thought her plan absurd.  
Convinced, the maiden he recalled,  
And o'er an army her installed.  
Thus did she see her labors crowned  
With triumph, evermore renowned.  
In token of her purity,  
In view of her security,  
An armor strong, of silver white,  
With glist'ning ornaments made bright,  
A standard indicating power,  
'Round which was the heraldic flower,  
The Fleur-de-lis of France, entwined  
In simple beauty rare to find ;  
A rusty sword, which she foretold  
Was hidden in a chapel old  
Near Chinon, and with crosses five,  
Was marked by some one, when alive, —  
As gifts on Joan were conferred,  
Except the sword which she preferred.  
And thus equipped, she took her place  
As general, prepared to face  
Her mortal foe, whose only aim  
Was France to conquer, France to claim.

Now, as these soldiers stood in line,  
By Joan led, they seemed divine, —  
As if an angel had been sent  
From Heaven with a regiment.  
And thus made ready to set out  
For Orleans, there arose a shout  
From crowds, whose wild, exultant cry  
Resounded to the very sky :  
“ Long live the maid who goes to bring  
Salvation to our land and king ! ”  
All officers, without reserve,  
The king commanded to observe  
Complete obedience to her,  
To whom all things they must refer.  
Subservient to God’s High Throne,  
She first began to raise the tone  
Of army morals, which she found  
Were anything but strong and sound.  
Cards, dice, all instruments of games,  
In camp and town, were soon in flames.  
And men of God were called to preach,  
Exhort, admonish, and to teach.  
Religion, patriotism, wars —  
Those things which indolence abhors,  
Now filled the army with a zeal,  
Which hitherto it did not feel.  
Enthusiasm’s wild delight  
Put cowardice and fear to flight.

Such preparation then was given  
To her the Delegate from Heaven.  
Thus ready, with majestic air,  
She bade her leaders to prepare  
Their march along the northern side  
Of river Loire, till they abide  
Near Orleans, where she bade them halt,  
And wait the orders for assault.  
On Loire's selected bank there grew  
Dense forests, which dark shadows threw  
O'er England's forces stationed there  
In secret service, to ensnare  
The French, whose daring army might,  
Perchance, pass through by day or night.  
This secret force, in numbers large,  
Was so arranged as to discharge . . .  
A most terrific, deadly shower  
Of arms, at danger's anxious hour.  
This filled the leaders with a dread,  
To lead as ordered, and, instead,  
They planned the maiden to deceive,  
That their own fears they might relieve.  
And so the southern bank they chose,  
But did not this to her disclose.  
Three days they marched with fierce desires,  
When Joan saw the lofty spires  
Of Orleans indistinctly rise  
Against the distant clouded skies ;

But indignation, righteous, just,  
O'erwhelmed her when she found she must  
The river ford before she could  
Appear at Orleans, if she would.  
Deceptive journey, well contrived,  
Thus made, thus failed ; for she arrived,  
In spite of falsehood and deceit,  
At Orleans with her force complete.  
Majestic Orleans, proud to stand  
Beneath the banner of her land,  
And wave the Fleur-de-lis of France  
Before great England's threatened lance,  
And in her grander strains to sing  
The praises of her Nation's king, —  
Now, weakened, stood in doubt and fear,  
Expecting hourly to appear  
Besieging England's mighty men,  
To take by storm the city, when,  
Behold ! the sounds of tramping feet  
The startled ears of Orleans greet ;  
The guards cry out in accents wild :  
“ An army comes, led by a child ! ”  
The bells are rung ; the cannons roar ;  
The flags are raised ; all fear is o'er.  
“ God bless the maid ! ” the masses cry.  
“ God grant her wisdom from on High !  
For, at this unexpected hour,  
His angel comes with mighty power.”

The long, exciting, tedious tramp  
The troops fatigued, and they encamp  
Outside the city limits, where  
The night's refreshment they prepare.  
The evening shadows softly creep  
O'er tired nature, and sweet sleep  
The heavy, drooping eyelids close,  
And hush the lips in calm repose.  
The next morn, with the rising sun,  
Was heard the pealing rising gun.  
And soon the camp was full of life,  
Preparing for the deadly strife.  
Joan, with ardor most intense,  
Gave orders for the grand defence.  
Details of men were sent to guard  
The country, where the foe pressed hard.  
She, with two hundred lances bright,  
That gleamed beneath the morning light,  
Advanced and entered Orleans gate,  
The English movements to await.  
And now, that she might lose no time,  
In language fearless, bold, sublime,  
A letter was despatched with speed  
From Orleans for the king to read.  
“Great England's King,” she said; “and you,  
The Duke of Bedford, whom a few  
Will dare proclaim, with great array  
Of foul political display,

And false pretensions showy, bold,  
The Regency of France to hold ;  
You Suffolk of immortal fame ;  
John Talbot, too, an honored name ;  
You Thomas Scales, who claim with pride,  
Lieutenantship, and more beside ;  
You archers straight and men-at-arms,  
Who fill Orleans with great alarms, —  
To all, I say, in mercy given,  
Surrender to the King of Heaven !  
Haste ! in the name of God, to fly  
To your own country ere you die !  
I am supported by the rod  
Of that eternal, just, wise God,  
Whose vengeance you shall surely know,  
Unless the flag of truce you show !  
For with the help of Him, I swear  
To war upon you everywhere !  
Believe me, in this fearful hour,  
My King shall give me greater power  
Than you can bring with all the host  
Of valiant men of which you boast.”  
Such was the challenge which she sent  
From Orleans for acknowledgment.  
Derision, laughter, jests, and jeers,  
Low mockery, disgusting sneers,  
Repulsive, loathsome, filthy, mean,  
Disdainful language, most obscene,

In answer to her challenge came  
And justly made her blush with shame.  
“ War, most destructive,” she replies,  
“ Shall bury France, or France franchise.  
Come on ! and if we first retreat,  
We will ask mercy at your feet.  
But if the God of Hosts shall bring  
Us off triumphant, we will sing  
Loud hallelujahs to His name,  
And echo will repeat the same.”  
He who awaits Jehovah’s word  
Knows not what moment shall be heard  
His summons ; but unrest, alarm,  
Ofttimes forerun, forewarn, forearm.  
One day, amid her sweet repose,  
When sleep her eyelids tried to close,  
That she might feel the sweet embrace  
Of dreamland’s calmness, where no trace  
Of wearied, worn, unrestful feet  
Their footsteps left, her eyes to meet,  
And that brief respite might relax  
The mental strain which would o’ertax  
Her mental engine and impair  
The driving force secluded there,  
She sprang with suddenness of flight  
Upon her feet, and with delight  
And fear commingled shouted : “ Haste !  
Arm me ! Arm me ! Will you make waste

Of time? Daulon? For now I hear  
My summons, loud and strong and clear ;  
To arms ! To arms ! To war ! To fight !  
Before the day gives place to night !  
Advance at once ! and fear forget  
Ere France's foundations are upset ! ”  
Whilst Daulon was attiring her  
For war, a great uproar and stir  
Was heard throughout both street and lane  
As if the people were insane :—  
“ The guards are murdered at the gates ! ”  
They cried, “ God save us from the Fates ! ”  
This touched the maiden to the heart :  
“ O God ! ” she said, “ let me depart !  
The blood of France is flowing free ;  
A sight I can not, will not see.  
My sword ! My lance ! My horse ! My horse !  
Let me not stay to taste remorse ! ”  
She mounted in great haste her steed,  
Her standard seized, and at full speed  
She rode until the gates she reached  
Where murdered guards in death lay bleached.  
At this sad sight her face partook  
The pale, unsightly, ghastly look  
On each repulsive corpse portrayed  
Till she seemed life in death arrayed.  
But quick her full returning blood  
Brought to her mind a raging flood

Of indignation which abstained  
Not from expression though constrained.  
The French had tried to overthrow  
The Bastile of St. Loup : But, lo,  
She found that they were driv'n back  
By Talbot, in their first attack,  
That they had sought irresolute  
Orleans with Talbot in pursuit,  
That guards who dared to interfere  
Were murdered outright with the spear,  
That consternation, grief, and fright  
Had valor put to rapid flight.  
And thus their drooping courage fraught  
With weakness utterly unsought,  
In words of love and righteousness  
She rallied with great earnestness :  
“ Weak sons of France ! Apostates, all !  
In flight most great, in valor small —  
Your country’s cry is for defense,  
Your mother’s anguish most intense,  
In prayer to God each hour ascends  
And to Him all your acts commends.  
Your wives in bitter tears at home  
Watch faithfully for peace to come  
That they may hear once more the voice  
Of him their dearest, sweetest choice.  
Your infants at their mother’s breast,  
In blissful ignorance at rest,

Your aged father's childish tears  
Increasing with advancing years ;  
Your girls at play around his feet ;  
Your sisters at the mercy seat ;  
Your fondest hope, your sweetest joy,  
Your darling pride, your happy boy ;  
O soldiers ! Men ! Will you indeed  
Prove traitors in this hour of need ?  
May God forbid ! awake ! unite !  
And stand up for your country's right ! ”  
These earnest words from Joan's heart,  
The influence they did impart  
Recalled their fleeting bravery,  
Their great disdain for slavery,  
And caused each honest heart to vow  
Allegiance new, unbroken now.  
One's love of country, when grown cold,  
Rekindled, burns increased tenfold.  
Now with her army thus inspired,  
And with eternal vengeance fired,  
She shouted to her valiant van :  
“ Advance to conquer, man for man ! ”  
Then onward to their foe they rushed  
With fury of a storm unhushed.  
They routed Talbot and assailed  
The fortress where he had prevailed.  
Hot was the contest now pursued  
And great the slaughter which ensued.

Defensive and offensive, both  
Fell dead, still faithful to their oath.  
And when the triumph was complete,  
And Joan held the victor's seat,  
With garrison in bondage kept,  
The tender-hearted maiden wept  
To see the wounded and the dead,  
With no one there a tear to shed.  
What more distressing picture can  
Present itself to mortal man  
Than when a soldier—foe or friend—  
On battlefield meets his sad end !  
With no kind word to soothe his mind,  
With no sweet act of any kind ;  
But left to bleed, to faint, to groan,  
To die uncomforted, alone.  
Upon the river's bank there stood  
In Orleans' haughty neighborhood  
Four fortresses which had defied  
The Maid, the king, and God beside.  
Resolved to strike another blow  
If signs of peace they failed to show,  
She made one more attempt to spare  
Such flow of blood and deep despair ;  
She scaled a tower's lofty height  
And with an arrow's rapid flight  
She shot a letter swift and straight  
Within the hostile, guarded gate ;

She summoned them their arms to burn  
And promised mercy in return.  
Their ears were deaf, their minds were set  
And they would not surrender yet.  
They made the arrow quickly bear  
An answer backward through the air.  
She blushed on hearing these replies,  
Then said : "God knows that these are lies !  
Within three days you shall repent  
Of this foul message you have sent."  
With greatest haste her plans were made  
These strongholds quickly to invade.  
Scarce had the Oriental hue  
Of dewy morn escaped from view ;  
Nor had the sun his zenith cleared  
A second time when there appeared  
Opposing armies, war equipped,  
With spears and arrows sharply tipped.  
As cloud approaching thunder-cloud,  
With awful pace and challenge loud,  
Advances boldly, then recedes  
To gather all the force it needs,—  
So moved these armies, so began  
A more decisive battle than  
Had yet been fought since first the Maid  
Bore arms her king and France to aid.  
Now, back and forth, both armies swayed,  
And little progress either made ;

So closely balanced were the twain,  
That both might hope triumph to gain.  
But finally the weaker fled,  
Which threw defeat on Joan's head.  
She to an island had retired,  
From which she saw all that transpired.  
And when she saw the French repulsed  
And put to flight, she was convulsed  
With shame ; and springing to her boat,  
Which at her service was afloat,  
Into their very midst she bore  
That power which had triumphed before.  
Her presence, voice, her standard bright,  
Her face revealing God and Right,  
Electrified her feeble men,  
And touched their hearts with pride again.  
“ Oh men ! ” she said ; “ why falter now ?  
Be faithful to your solemn vow !  
Come, follow me ! your steps retrace !  
Nor dare your country's flag disgrace ! ”  
Then back she led her valiant band  
And fired the forts with her own hand  
Great was the terror and despair,  
But greater was the triumph there ;  
For smoking ashes, bloody stones,  
And broken swords, and skulls, and bones,  
And bodies mangled and half-burned,  
All trophies which the victor earned,

Remained the double tale to tell  
Of triumph and defeat as well.  
Triumphant songs the army raised :  
“ Long live the Maid ! ” and “ God be praised ! ”  
Her leaders thought that they had gained  
A full surrender, and refrained  
From further action, till they heard  
From Joan’s lips, the burning word :  
“ Beware ! Good men, you may have had  
Your counsellors, but they were bad.  
Be ready ere to-morrow’s sun  
Begins his daily course to run ;  
For from his shining, golden car,  
He shall behold more bloody war  
Than yet the most observing eyes  
Have witnessed underneath our skies.  
And, in this dreadful, bloody strife,  
My blood shall flow ; perhaps my life  
On wings invisible shall soar  
Beyond this vale forevermore.  
To-morrow great Orleans shall see  
Her downfall or her victory ;  
For on the morrow we advance,  
With every valiant, trusty lance,  
Against the Bastile des Tournelles,  
Which in resistance none excel.  
This fort aggressive England calls  
Her best defence, in trench and walls,

And, if defeated we retreat,  
Orleans shall bow at England's feet,  
And France, belovéd France, shall bear  
The yoke of England in despair ;  
But, if our banner, men, shall wave  
In splendid triumph o'er the brave,  
Then shall Orleans exultant raise  
Te Deums to the God we praise  
And France, with banners high unfurled,  
Declare her glory to the world.  
O, men ! the morrow's eve shall see  
Us slaves to England's crown, or free.  
Let every man his God implore  
This night for help, as ne'er before.”  
Now, when the lovely goddess Morn  
Began creation to adorn,  
To put her sable sister night,  
Her equal rival quick to flight,  
To paint the skies with rosy hues,  
To fill the air with balmy dews,  
To burst the swelling, fragrant buds,  
To scatter sweetness o'er in floods,  
To break the slumbers, wake the song  
Of forest chorus, still so long,  
The simple child, the pious Maid,  
To God her Helper sweetly prayed :  
“ Dear Father, whose all-seeing eye  
Creation scans, nor passes by

A sparrow's fall unheeded, O,  
What passing goodness thou dost show !  
To Thee I lift my feeble strain,  
And dearly hope 'tis not in vain.  
What I have done that is amiss,  
Forgive, forget, O Lord ; 't is bliss  
Unqualified, supreme, to know  
That Thou hast pardoned us below.  
Thou art my strength, my life, my all,  
Though terrors shake and fears appall.  
For guidance I would humbly pray  
Through the great crisis of to-day ;  
And if this day should be my last,  
I thank Thee, Father, for the past,  
For my frail life so long preserved,  
For all Thy mercies undeserved.  
And as my eyelids close in death,  
My last expiring, fleeting breath  
Shall utter praises to Thy name  
And Thy great goodness shall proclaim.  
To Thee my soldiers I commend,  
And ask that Thou wilt comfort send  
To ev'ry wife, and child, and friend  
Who waits at home the battle's end.  
Deal tenderly with those who weep,  
Be merciful to those who sleep  
To wake no more till Morn shall break,  
And Thy Archangel, flight shall take

To open ev'ry silent grave  
To judge, to punish, or to save.  
And now once more, as Christ Thy Son  
Prayed, let me pray : Most Holy One,  
Our Father who in Heaven art,  
Thy name be hallowed in each heart.  
Thy kingdom come ; Thy will be done  
In earth and Heaven, both as one.  
Our daily bread we ask from Thee  
As Christ who died on Calvary.  
Forgive our debts as we forgive  
Our debtors, Lord, while here we live,  
And lead us not, we humbly pray,  
Into temptation's flow'ry way.  
Deliver us from evil Thou  
Before whom we submissive bow,  
All glory, power, and praise shall then  
Forever more be Thine. Amen !”  
The maid's petition, Heaven-born,  
Great beauty added to the morn,  
And Art, however high or great,  
Could not its beauty imitate.  
While Joan prayed to God and wept,  
The mighty fortress guarded slept  
Unconscious of the awful gloom  
That threatened its eternal doom.  
With deep entrenchment, massive wall  
The guarded Bastile challenged all,

And safety seemed to find a spot  
Where danger could molest her not.  
But ditch, nor wall, nor work of man  
Could disconcert the maiden's plan.  
While England's strongest fortress stood  
Unvanquished and unstained with blood.  
A few short hours had passed away  
And morn had introduced the day.  
The maiden could no longer wait,  
Her inward fears would not abate :  
She roused her army's pride again  
In words as follows : "Valiant men !  
Behold, I pray, yon fortress wall !  
Shall it defy? or shall it fall?  
Come on ! ye brave ! and do your best  
And God above will do the rest !  
If we the Bastile capture, oh !  
Why should we longer dread the foe ?  
Now all at once with shouts and cries  
The French rush forward to their prize ;  
With one combined, tremendous blow  
They struck the fortress of the foe ;  
Protected well by wall and trench  
And grand artillery ; the French  
As fast as they advanced were slain  
And lay in heaps — sad prize to gain.  
The horrors that were pictured there  
Would equal Hell's deep, dark despair :

The moans, the groans, the sobs, the sighs,  
The bloodless faces, bloodshot eyes,  
The hands for mercy clenched in prayer,  
The cries their misery to spare, —  
Would thrill the hardest heart with fears,  
And dim the sternest eyes with tears.  
Some called for mother, some for wife ;  
Some prayed for help, and some for life ;  
Some cursed this final, fatal morn ;  
Some cursed the day that they were born ;  
Some murmured, filled with loyal pride,  
“ O, God, my country save,” and died ;  
Some rolled in agony, then smiled,  
Submissive, wordless, reconciled.  
Oh ! horrid scene of dreadful birth !  
Oh ! pandemonium on earth !  
At such great slaughter and distress,  
The French became most spiritless.  
A panic seized the multitude,  
And Fear ran off with Fortitude.  
Alone the maiden firm remained  
And at their cowardice complained ;  
Then fearless she a ladder placed  
Against the rampart in great haste,  
And, sword in hand, she scaled the wall, —  
But hark ! A hiss — a shriek — a fall —  
And in the ditch she gasping lay  
Her life-blood stealing swift away.

An arrow had been straightly aimed,  
Had pierced her neck, — surrender claimed.  
The English, thinking her by far  
To be the greatest prize in war,  
Rushed from the fortress quick as thought  
That she in bondage might be brought :  
But ere they could their prize obtain  
The French with all their might and main,  
Returned regardless of their fate  
And rescued her inviolate.  
She soon recovered from her wound  
Undaunted and for triumph bound.  
Desirous that no time be lost,  
Regardless of what it might cost,  
Remounted, she her army led  
Back to the fortress and their dead,  
“ Behold ! ” she said, “ your comrades slain !  
Shall all this slaughter be in vain ?  
If valor only held the place  
Which fear possesses, you would face  
More perils than are here arrayed  
Nor be discouraged, nor dismayed.”  
The English, who believed her dead,  
Supposing that her troops had fled,  
Were struck with horror when their eyes  
Beheld her form remounted rise  
Before them, like some spirit sent  
On restless wings of discontent

To finish some great work begun,  
But which stern Death had found undone.  
With greatest haste the trench was spanned  
By bridge which was as quickly manned.  
Across this, armed with shield and spear,  
With French battalion in the rear,  
A knight, whose courage won the prize,  
Advanced the fortress to surprise.  
The English leader, Gladsdale, shook  
With terror, and his flight he took  
Behind a second trench to shield  
Himself from his new fate revealed.  
The French pursued him close behind,  
With shouts and threats of every kind,  
While all the air and earth around  
Were filled with the exultant sound  
Of Joan crying as she ran :  
“ Surrender, Gladsdale, while you can !  
Thou hast reviled me, yet I will  
Show lenience and pity still.”  
And, as these words she uttered, lo !  
The bridge on which he met his foe  
With one tremendous crash went down,  
Which threw defeat on England’s crown.  
Grand exultations, loud huzzas  
Re-echoed to the sleeping stars.  
The bells of Orleans loudly rang,  
The multitudes loud pæans sang,

Their great deliverer had come,  
Sweet angel, from a sweeter home.  
The maiden modestly believed  
The victory by God achieved.  
Her mind replete with holy joys,  
Unbounded gratitude employs  
To Him, her Maker, Helper, Friend,  
Who ruled the battle to its end.  
While men first glorified her name,  
Then God's, declaring both the same ;  
She was their glory, she their rod,  
She their preserver, she their God.  
Thus Orleans by the Maid was saved,  
And France her banners proudly waved.  
Proud, sinful man his God ignores  
Till danger comes, then God implores.  
The English leaders now aver  
That Joan led, but God led her.  
He who sits down to magnify  
His own success, nor reasons why,  
Becomes an egotist, and then  
A god, superior to men,  
And soon he dares to seize the reins  
From Him who holds them, nor restrains ;  
But, just as he begins to rule,  
He finds himself a stupid fool ;  
His bubbles burst, his castles fall,  
He grasps at nothing, gets it all.

Unlike such dangerous displays  
Of self-conceit, which never pays,  
The maiden, thinking it a crime  
In such vain shows to waste her time,  
Prepared for victory complete,  
By kneeling at the mercy seat,  
These were her beautiful displays,  
God first, self last, which always pays.  
Now marching from Orleans at will,  
Which with her praise resounded still,  
They marched to strike a with'ring blow  
Against the next stronghold, Jergeau.  
Scarce had the lovely month of June  
Put half her chords in perfect tune,  
When battle's shout and cannon's roar  
A great attack announced once more.  
The angel Death with sable wings  
Besmeared with blood exultant sings :  
“ O mortal men ! why fight and die ?  
Who gains the triumph, you or I ?  
Do as you will ; while you remain  
The more you lose, the more I gain.  
What has been done I will undo.  
Created beings I pursue,  
And as they fight, or dance, or sing,  
Or praise, or curse, I snap the string.  
Thus millions now I have in store,  
Ten million times ten millions more

Will gather round me one by one  
Ere my great work on earth is done.”  
But what is life in time of war?  
‘T is no more than a shooting-star  
Whose flight, unnoticed and unknown  
Sweeps through the azure and is gone.  
Amid the battle’s awful din,  
The French resolved Jergeau to win ;  
The maiden, by some power impelled,  
The rampart mounted, and upheld  
Her standard resolute, alone,  
When suddenly a ragged stone  
Was hurled and in its whizzing flight  
It felled her senseless from their sight.  
The angel Death with horrid shriek  
Descended like a lightning’s streak  
And clutched the Maid ; but no ; O, no !  
God’s arm protects ; dread angel, go !  
With broken helmet she arose  
Up from the ditch where brief repose  
Had lulled her senses fast to sleep,  
And stationed angels watch to keep.  
Her casque of steel and flowing hair,  
Which was arranged with maiden’s care,  
Her precious life so well preserved  
That Death, though present, unobserved  
Retired without his long-sought game  
Into the darkness whence he came.

Thus rescued she resumed her place,  
Her duty stamped upon her face.  
Her army seemed at once to draw  
New inspiration when they saw  
Their leader from the foe preserved  
To vindicate the flag she served.  
Now as a mountain wave recedes,  
Then gathers force as it proceeds  
Until it reaches rock or shore  
Then dashes on with awful roar,  
So Joan's army first withdrew,  
And then with all their force they threw  
Themselves in one united mass  
Against the city, and, alas !  
The feeble stronghold tried in vain  
Its re-enforcements to obtain.  
A deadly struggle now took place,  
Each moment seemed to fill all space,  
With spirits groaning, as their flight  
They took beyond our mortal sight.  
Just then the Maid rushed to their head,  
Her face appearing like the dead.  
“Brave men !” she said : “Do not delay !  
Dear France is proud of you to-day !”  
One mighty effort then they made,  
The English force became dismayed.  
And as they saw the ghastly form  
Of Joan riding on the storm

Of fire, and smoke, and shot, and ball,  
Jergeau surrendered — once for all.  
Another great day's work was done,  
Another victory was won.  
As through the city now her own  
She rode amid the dying groan,  
The sob, the gasp, the cry, the prayer,  
The pictures of abject despair,  
Her eyes were moved to tears to see  
Such suffering humanity :  
And so dismounting, full of love,  
Like some sweet angel from above  
The bleeding wounds herself she dressed,  
The dying moments sweetly blessed ;  
She had a kind word for each one,  
Unchristian act she had for none.  
Success or failure once begun  
A rapid course it seems to run.  
Success holds mastery o'er all,  
Till suddenly it gets a fall ;  
Then Failure takes most rapid strides  
And conquers all and all derides.  
Success now seems to hold the reins  
And laughs while Failure sore complains ;  
And every effort seems to yield  
New triumphs on the battlefield ;  
For city after city threw  
Its gates wide open, as she drew

Her valiant army round its walls,  
Then to her aid Jehovah calls.  
As onward now her march she took  
Auxerre and Troyes and Chalons shook  
With fear and opened wide their gates,  
Submissive to the higher fates.  
And Rheims also was glad to raise  
The Fleurs-de-lis of France with praise.  
O, mighty plan so well conceived !  
O, mighty victory achieved !  
Joan, the peasant of Lorraine,  
Had broken England's mighty chain,  
Stern Duty's hardest paths had trod,  
Had saved her king, obeyed her God,  
And had enrolled her peasant name  
On history's bright page of fame.  
It was a lovely summer's day,  
The breaking clouds had passed away  
And had unveiled the gorgeous sun,  
And all Creation had begun  
Its mystic beauty to display,  
For it was Coronation Day.  
The air was clear, the skies were bright,  
The dewdrops sparkled in the light,  
The flow'rs, in endless beauty spread  
O'er hill and vale, their fragrance shed,  
The birds sang sweetly from the trees  
. And filled with song each rising breeze :

All nature seemed to find a voice,  
And with humanity rejoice  
And praise her God as ne'er before,  
For France had found her king once more.  
The streets of Rheims were thronged with men  
Who came to see their king again,  
And ev'ry window, ev'ry tower,  
And ev'ry spire at daybreak's hour,  
The flag of France in glory waved  
In honor of their country saved.  
The ringing bells from lofty spires,  
The cannon's roar, the great bonfires,  
The songs and the exultant cries  
Extended to the very skies.  
A long procession joyous, wild,  
Conducted by the Maid, the child,  
Approached the grand cathedral door  
And entered slowly to restore  
The crown, the sword, the robe, the rod,  
To him their king, but not their God.  
The Maid beside the altar kneeled,  
Her lips not prayerless, though sealed.  
Her standard in one hand she grasped,  
Her cross the other tightly clasped.  
The gorgeous sun with rays of white,  
Transformed by painted window light  
Into a spectrum not its own  
Upon the Maid and altar shone.

This transformation made her seem  
More like an angel in a dream,  
Where things unite and reunite  
And make us think that wrong is right ;  
Where Nature's laws absurdly act,  
Where fancy seems as true as fact ;  
There was a solemn, tomb-like air,  
Which hushed the lips in silent prayer ;  
And here, before both God and men,  
The crownless king was king again.  
And just as he received the crown,  
The mighty mass of men knelt down  
In adoration of the Maid  
Who crowned her king, as she had said.  
Then spoke she in her sweetest tone :  
“ O, gentle king, God’s will is done,  
And dear old France loud praise will sing,  
Because thou art again her king.

O God, who rul’st supreme, alone,  
One voice to ‘Thee we raise :  
For all the goodness Thou hast shown,  
Accept our feeble praise.

O, France ! let every vale rejoice !  
Let ev’ry hill proclaim !  
Let ev’ry creature find a voice  
And praise Jehovah’s name.”

Then from this vast and happy throng  
Arose a sweet, responsive song :

“ O Thou ! before whom nations bow  
In supplicating prayer :  
Behold our nation rescued now  
By one so young and fair !

Dear Maid, let angels now descend  
To take thy sword and lance,  
Thy coronation to attend  
As Savior of Dear France.”

## II.

WHILE passing through life's mortal flight  
Some die while fame is at its height  
And leave the world their trophies won,  
To tell what more they might have done :  
While others seem to live too long,  
They reach their climax full and strong,  
Then live just long enough to see  
Their splendor fade, their glory flee,  
And all their friends who used to raise  
Unbounded gratitude and praise  
For all their victories achieved  
And all the benefits received,  
Now say, as others they address :  
“ They have outlived their usefulness.”  
Now, had the Maid at Rheims expired,  
When fame's bright zenith she 'd acquired,  
France would have mourned full thirty days,  
And draped each town with sad displays.  
Men would have sung her praises o'er  
Until their prating tongues were sore.  
But no ; her wonderful career  
Was not predestined to end here ;

Her great adversity enrolls  
Her name among the greater souls.  
Now when the king at Rheims was crowned  
The people stood in awe profound,  
Convinced indeed that God had made  
Him king of France by special aid.  
Beneath the bright unclouded sky  
Of torrid, scorching-hot July,  
The king and army marched from Rheims  
Along one of the lesser streams,  
To capture Paris by that power  
Which had sustained the Maid each hour.  
The maiden urged the king to make  
At once a grand attack, to take  
Proud Paris from the haughty hands  
That closed her gates 'gainst his commands.  
The king, however, much preferred  
That the attack should be deferred  
Until he could negotiate  
For peace, however high the rate.  
Thus many days were thrown away  
In nothing but this vain display ;  
But when, at length, the king declared  
That he for battle was prepared,  
The maiden's face expression bore  
Such as had not been seen before.  
Her Voices warned her to remain  
And from encounter to refrain.

She therefore asked to be excused  
From battle ; this the king refused.  
He bade her to resume her course ;  
If not, she would be urged by force.  
She could not but observe a change  
In her career ; it seemed now strange.  
She felt that her great work was o'er,  
That she was called to fight no more.  
The future seemed to sadly say :  
“ O, maiden ! you have had your day.”  
With trench, and wall, and guarded gates,  
Proud Paris in suspense awaits  
The hour, when from her streets shall rise  
The songs of triumph to the skies.  
According to the king's command,  
The Maid and army took their stand  
On rising ground in full array  
Before the gate St. Honoré.  
Complete arrangements being made,  
A loud, terrific cannonade  
Commenced on either side, and raged  
Intensely as for life engaged.  
Joan commanded the assault,  
And did it, too, without a fault ;  
Intenser and intenser grew  
The conflict as they nearer drew.  
The Maid, and leaders of the French,  
At once leaped o'er the foremost trench,

And started for the second, where  
A storm of bullets filled the air.  
At this the leaders shook with fear,  
For death, appalling death was near.  
They faltered and with hurried breath  
They cried : "O, Maid ! invite not death."  
" Fear not !" she said ; " for God can save,  
Though we are hurled into the grave.  
Come on ! and let your country know  
That you fear not death's feeble blow !"  
Then on they rushed, no time to waste,  
And reached the trench in breathless haste.  
" Fill up the trench, O men, with mud  
And cross it, though you cross in blood !"  
The trench was filled ; then Joan waved  
That standard which dear France had saved.  
And shouted in her loudest tone :  
" Surrender, Paris, to God's Throne !  
For He who rules both earth and sky"—  
She said no more, but shrieked ; her thigh  
Was pierced, and from the wound there gushed  
A crimson stream which unimpeded rushed.  
She fainted, fell among the dead,  
And seemed like one whose life had fled.  
Now, when the king knew this defeat,  
His order came : " Retreat ! retreat !"  
The maiden heard this with despair ;  
Her fingers clutched her bloody hair.

“ O God ! ” she murmured, “ is this right ? ”  
Then fainted, gasped,— oh ! dreadful sight.  
Night fell upon the city, plain,  
The ground was covered with the slain.  
And, as she lay in great distress,  
Despairing from her ill success,  
Her soldiers cursed her, head and foot,  
And shameful questions to her put.  
She sobbed and wept, she rolled and moaned,  
She shrieked in agony and groaned,  
She raised to Heaven her tearful eyes,  
Then most imploringly she cries :  
“ O God ! forgive ! forgive ! I pray !  
Thou knowest all. Oh ! fatal day ! ”  
This was a bitter, awful draught,  
Which to its very dregs she quaffed.  
She soon began herself to doubt,  
Her faith went staggering about,  
She seemed to read her awful doom  
Inscribed in blood upon her tomb.  
“ No more to battle will I go,”  
She said ; “ no more to fight the foe.”  
And quietly her sword she hung  
In the cathedral where it swung  
In peace ; because she was afraid  
Some great mistake she might have made.  
Entreaties from her king and men  
Urged her to take up arms again.

She could but notice their appeal,  
And with renewed, more fervent zeal  
She said : " O king, I bow to thee ;  
For thy command is law to me.  
God has enthroned thee, God has raised  
France from her downfall, God be praised !  
I see before me clouds of woe,  
Yet, king, most noble king, I go.  
May God forbid that I, this day,  
My king, His servant, disobey ! "  
Great was the triumph England gained,  
Great was the loss the French sustained,  
When Paris from her walls unfurled  
The flag of England to the world.  
That this sad loss might be concealed,  
The French their dead bore from the field  
And in one mass, with fires so bright,  
They burned them in the dead of night  
And when the smoke had cleared away,  
And night was transformed into day,  
The ashes borne up by the gale,  
Were spread abroad to tell the tale.  
This great ill-fated enterprise  
The French seemed to demoralize.  
Success elates, puffs up, cajoles,  
But adverse fortune tries men's souls.  
And now succeeding a delay,  
Existing only for a day,

Hostilities afresh resumed,  
The French and English both consumed,  
She therefore took up arms once more :  
But not as she bore arms before.  
One night alone the Maid withdrew  
To seek, once more, an interview  
With those whose nature God conceals,  
With those before whom mortal kneels.  
Her soul was full of sadness now,  
She saw, or seemed to see, somehow,  
The Future filled with bloody lakes,  
With prison bars and burning stakes.  
No ray of light now met her eyes,  
No hope, no help, before her lies.  
But hush ! Her Voices now return ;  
She gives an ear that she may learn.  
They speak to her, — they seem so strange ;  
Again ! she starts. O, what a change !  
It used to be her great delight  
To talk with them by day or night.  
They were the happy angels then  
Whose mission was to cheer up men.  
But now, like spirits from the grave  
Whose flesh and blood the worms still crave,  
There seemed to be a horrid throng,  
Which to the tomb alone belong,  
That stood before her anxious gaze  
To talk with her, to curse or praise ;

And soon they broke the solemn pause  
By moving their unsightly jaws.  
She heard a low, sepulchral tone  
That chilled her to the very bone.  
They spoke ; she shuddered, then remained  
Speechless, motionless, as if chained.  
“ Within three months,” said one, “ a cell  
Of stone and steel shall hold thee well ! ”  
“ Within six more,” a second cried,  
“ Thou shalt be by the judges tried.”  
“ Within a year,” the third then spake,  
“ Thou shalt be tortured at the stake.”  
She shrieked aloud : “ Oh ! God above !  
Hast Thou withdrawn Thy tender love ? ”  
But hold, a light breaks on her woe.  
She hears a voice she used to know,  
“ God will be with thee, Maid,” it said ;  
“ Fear not ! A crown awaits thy head ! ”  
At this her sorrow turned to bliss,  
She seemed to leave that dark abyss,  
She gazed into the sky above,  
She saw descend, a pure, white dove,  
She leaped for joy. “ Sweet angel come  
And take me to your happy home ! ”  
The dove drew nigh on noiseless wings.  
She listens. Hark ! The creature sings :  
“ Sweet girl, arise ! Take up thy lance,  
Thou hast not yet done all for France.

Be faithful, fervent, earnest, true,  
And God will keep and comfort you.”  
Then stretching out her arms once more,  
She said : “ O, let me with thee soar !  
Let me this cruel world forget ! ”  
The answer came : “ Not yet ! Not yet ! ”  
And then the dove returning flies  
Back to its home within the skies :  
And as it takes its silent flight  
It sings with vanishing delight :  
“ Be faithful, fervent, earnest, true,  
And God will keep and comfort you.”  
The vision left the maid so weak  
That she could hardly move or speak.  
She sighed, she cried, and tried in vain  
To keep awake her dozing brain.  
But no, sweet sleep his visit pays,  
And strews with flow’rs the thorny ways.  
When she awoke, night had withdrawn  
Her darkest curtain, bringing dawn.  
The twinkling stars had closed their eyes,  
And one by one retired to rise  
No more till day’s great king had pressed  
His steeds into the golden West.  
The Maid arose and looked around  
As if she feared the very ground.  
“ Sad night,” she said ; “ is this a dream ?  
And are things to be what they seem ?

O, would that I might fall asleep  
To wake where men no more shall weep ! ”  
Then kneeling, bowed with grief and care,  
She sought relief by way of prayer.

“ O Thou ! whose ways we cannot know,  
How poor and weak is man,  
He sees life’s trouble, sorrow, woe,  
Yet seldom sees Thy plan.

“ All that remains of life to me  
Seems desolate and drear.  
How could I live, then, without Thee  
My lonely life to cheer ?

“ Whatever things Thou hast in store  
For me, it matters not.  
I will extol Thee and adore,  
Though Hell should be my lot.

“ And now, Dear Father, as I go  
To take up arms again,  
Preserve me, keep me from the foe,  
From prison cells. Amen.”

Alas ! when once misfortune guides,  
All hope of better prospects hides ;  
And as one takes the downward road,  
The lightest feather seems a load ;

And all he meets, both small and great,  
Add something to increase the weight,  
Until he cannot move, or bear  
The load increased by one small hair ;  
Then laugh to see him groan with pain,  
Advise him not to groan, complain,  
Console by telling his defects,  
His sins, his weaknesses, neglects,  
By telling what he should have done,  
What laurels some one else has won.  
Perchance he asks a helping hand,  
He gets a sharp, cold reprimand,  
And finally, abject Despair  
Finds him a wretch that does not care.  
His cool, sarcastic friends then say :  
“ It is his fault ; he had his way.”  
Such seemed to be the maiden’s lot,  
When Duty called her to the spot  
Where armies met in bold array  
To find out who should win the day.  
How often men their duty see,  
And nothing more. Why should this be ?  
Joan, without her wonted zeal,  
Went forth to fight without appeal.  
For Compiègne she then set out  
And conquered all upon the route.  
This city, strongly fortified  
By massive walls and trenches wide,

She sought with forces to supply  
Against the Duke of Burgundy.  
The ringing notes, so loud and clear,  
Of proud, eccentric chanticleer  
Had bade the silent, starry night  
Away to take its noiseless flight,  
Had just announced a dawning day  
In balmy, fragrant, blushing May,  
Had broke the slumbers of the birds,  
Had woke the sleepy, dozing herds,  
Had filled the atmosphere around  
With one continued, joyous sound,—  
When Joan marched within the gate  
Of Compiègne, there to await  
Burgundian and English foe,  
Who came the city to o'erthrew.  
She went at once to church to take  
Communion, and confession make.  
The blush of youth upon her cheek  
Had faded now, and pale and weak,  
A pillar of the nave she sought,  
And leaned against it, lost in thought.  
Grieved by the sadness of her face,  
Both men and children thronged the place,  
Attracted to her by that love  
Which draws the heart of man above.  
“Alas! good friends, and children dear,”  
She said, “why do you thus draw near?”

My heart tells me that I am sold  
To England—God forbid ! Behold  
By traitors I shall be betrayed,  
My death I can not then evade.  
O, pray for me with all your heart,  
For king and France and I must part !  
O Treason ! Treason ! born of Hell !  
Alas ! I know thee but too well !  
O God ! behold thy servant here  
With death, tormenting death, to cheer !  
Wilt Thou desert me, Holy One ?  
But no ; Thy will, not mine, be done ! ”  
The service closed, Joan retired  
To do as he, her king, desired.  
The sun had scarcely raised his head  
Above his rosy-tinted bed,  
When from the king the order came :  
Advance to conquer in my name !  
Leave Compiègne, the river cross,  
And face the foe whate'er the loss !  
She left the city with her men,  
And barely crossed the river, when  
Upon the enemy she fell  
And fought courageously and well.  
She never had displayed before  
Her fortitude and valor more ;  
Three times she forced them to retreat,  
Three times acknowledge a defeat.

From morn till noon, till close of day,  
She held the enemy at bay ;  
But just before the sun went down  
On this day's well-deserved renown,  
Burgundian and English host  
Unite e'en to their uttermost,  
Resolved to capture live or dead,  
The Maid before whom armies fled ;  
For they considered her alone,  
The soul of France in terror shown,  
The living cause of their defeats,  
The pow'r that conquers whom it meets.  
Unequal contest : on one side  
The English forces stretching wide  
Advanced, their weapons glist'ning bright  
Beneath the sunset's gorgeous light :  
Opposed — most faithful to their post —  
A mere handful of men at most —  
The maiden's army stood prepared  
To fight as long as life was spared.  
Both armies halted face to face,  
Each man, each weapon was in place.  
Both stood as if to be reviewed.  
A moment's stillness then ensued  
Like that small fraction of an hour  
Which comes before a thunder-shower.  
The sun seemed to restrain his car  
To watch this bloody scene of war.

From this deep stillness then awoke  
The cannon's roar, with stifling smoke,  
The weapon's clash, the death alarms,  
The captains' cries : "To arms ! To arms !" "  
The maiden's voice was clearly heard  
As at the head her horse she spurred ;  
"Come on ! Be faithful to the end !  
Your country's honor, men, defend !" "  
Now ev'ry muscle, nerve, was strained.  
Death had no terror, Valor reigned.  
They fought, most fearlessly, the foe.  
No signs of weakness did they show.  
At last, surrounded, Joan knew,  
There was no hope. A sigh she drew.  
She told her men that they must yield  
And fly if possible, the field.  
They sought the Oise, irresolute,  
The enemy in close pursuit.  
Their weary, sore, unwilling feet  
Reluctantly sought this retreat.  
They reached the river Oise at last,  
Across its bridge they safely passed,  
And refuge found within the gate  
Of Compiègne inviolate.  
Alas ! Joan too long delayed,  
Her better judgment disobeyed :  
For at the point of sword and lance  
She still remained to fight for France

And with her standard in her hand  
Kept back the foe as by command.  
The bridge the last man safely crossed.  
She turned about. No time was lost.  
She spurred her horse at awful rate,  
She reached the bridge — too late ! too late !  
It rose and left the Maid alone —  
A prisoner to England's throne.  
An archer seized her with great force  
And dragged her roughly from her horse.  
She rose defiantly and said,  
With glitt'ring sword above her head :  
“ My blood the thirsty ground shall drain,  
Before I yield to England's chain ! ”  
At this the archer not alarmed  
Most quietly the Maid disarmed.  
And then in chains he bound her fast—  
Joan the Maid was slave at last.  
The Bastard of Vendôme obtained  
The Maid and held her firmly chained.  
No victory could be so great  
To England as the maiden's fate,  
To accident or treason due,  
To which of them she thought she knew.  
The chief of Coëpiègne, by name  
De Fleury, made her blush with shame.  
For surely his command — alas !  
The drawbridge raised when she would pass.

The English troops are wild with joy,  
Burgundians loud songs employ,  
While ev'ry cannon's dreadful roar  
And ev'ry banner red with gore,  
Te Deums in cathedrals sung,  
Hats thrown in air by old and young,  
And loud huzzas and ringing bells  
And great bonfires with shouts and yells  
Announce the capture of the Maid  
By Heaven sent her king to aid.  
Like cattle or like merchandise,  
Who owned her gave the highest price.  
Unmindful of the great disgrace  
They dragged her caged from place to place.  
Like some wild beast from forest den  
They showed her to the eyes of men.  
Most shameful deeds, disgraceful acts  
Are sometimes found in sternest facts.  
To Beaurevoir, with eager pride,  
A castle strongly fortified,  
The Maid triumphantly they bore  
And threw her weeping on the floor.  
Gold buys not only what life needs  
But conscience, reputation, creeds.  
For six months she was bought and sold  
Like some commodity — for gold.  
To Rouen, then, 'mid scoffs and jeers,  
Her trial to await in tears,

She was removed ; and here began  
The history one dreads to scan.  
The tinted, falling, pretty leaves,  
The ripened grain in golden sheaves,  
The juicy fruits upon the trees,  
The homeward flight of birds and bees,  
The lovely, fading, withered flowers,  
The sad, yet pleasant, dreamy hours  
The frozen, sparkling, morning dew,  
The curling smoke from chimney-flue,  
The forest's mournful, murmur'ring sound,  
The hills in silence most profound,  
The Summer's valedict'ry strain  
Still ling'ring on the lonely plain,—  
Announced that Autumn days had come  
But oh ! those days how burdensome  
To her whose agony of soul  
Poured forth from that dark dungeon-hole.  
What beast however fierce and wild  
Was treated like this simple child !  
To satisfy desire or rage  
They threw her in an iron cage.  
In length it was by their design  
So short that she could not recline.  
In height, also by their command  
It was so low she could not stand.  
The third dimension could be seen  
Would just admit the Maid between

The massive bars to which great chains  
Were fastened to increase the pains.  
Around her neck one chain was wound,  
Her wrists and ankles others bound,  
And then the cage and Maid were thrown  
Into a cell and left alone.

How dark it was ! E'en darkest night,  
Compared with this dark cell, was light.  
To add to its most dreadful gloom,  
Foul odors, like those from the tomb,  
Arose and filled the chilly air  
With poison for the Maid to share.  
No sounds, save those from prison bell,  
Broke the dead silence of the cell.  
Joan, in this dark, dismal den,  
Wept o'er the treachery of men.  
Distressed by intense sorrow, she  
Poured forth her bitter agony :  
“ ‘T is not the pain that makes me cry,  
I would endure it all,— yes, die,—  
My country and my king to free  
From their accurséd slavery.  
But oh ! how weak, how false, profane  
Is man when seeking sordid gain.”  
She tried to clasp her hands in prayer,  
But no ; those cruel chains were there.  
Although her body was confined,  
No chains nor bars could check her mind.

And thus in sweetest earnestness  
Her lips her thoughts tried to express :  
“ Dear Father, help me at this hour,  
On earth, there is no saving power,  
Man has condemned me for my deeds,  
Not one — appears — who — intercedes.  
Wilt Thou — my soul — in mercy — keep? —  
For — give — them — all.” She falls asleep.  
But lo ! Life’s curtain is withdrawn,  
She sees the bright, celestial dawn,  
The Gates of Paradise unclose,  
She looks within, there are no woes,  
No fears, no chains, no deaths, no pains,  
But happiness supremest reigns.  
She saw a city made of gold  
With streets of pearl. Yes, more ; behold  
Ascending steps of crystal glass  
Support the angels as they pass  
From Earth to Heaven and convey  
Departed Spirits on their way.  
But hark ! She hears ecstatic strains,  
Seraphic music entertains ;  
It seems to come so very near,  
She looks ; the choruses appear.  
Three Saints attired in silver light  
Conducted, clad in garments bright,  
Ten thousand angels from the skies  
Before her sleepy, dreamy eyes.

And as the bright and happy throng  
Before her lightly pass along  
A tiny, pretty, fragrant flower  
Plucked by the angels from its bower,  
Each dropped and whispered : "God is love,"  
Then took its happy flight above ;  
And as its white receding wings  
So lightly bear it home it sings :  
" Be faithful, fervent, earnest, true  
And God will keep and comfort you."  
The Saints remained till all had fled,  
Then lifting up her weary head  
They broke asunder all her chains,  
Destroyed the cage and eased her pains,  
And smote the dungeon-wall of stone  
And took away her flesh and bone ;  
Then bade her swiftly to arise  
And mount with them the distant skies.  
She seemed to tread the very air.  
Space had foundations ev'rywhere.  
She bade the world a sweet good-night,  
She passed the twinkling stars in flight,  
She passed the sun and worlds unknown,  
She almost reached the Golden Throne,—  
When lo ! her chains the silence broke,  
She started, screamed. She had awoke.  
It was a **dream**. Alas — a dream  
Which made her lot more dreadful seem.

When grief and woe the mind distress  
How sweet is sleep's unconsciousness !  
But when from sleep the mind awakes  
Grief doubles, woe no limit takes !  
From bliss the Maid awoke to see  
Herself in abject misery.  
The vision was before her eyes  
But oh ! how dreadful were her cries !  
“ O God ! ” she said, “ why must I know  
This dungeon-cell, this hell below ?  
Why was I born ? O fatal day  
That gave life to this lump of clay !  
O Death ! Thou hast no sting for me !  
O Grave ! Thou hast no victory !  
My mother bowed in bitter tears,  
That mother who in tender years,  
Taught me to kneel, taught me to pray :  
‘ Our Father.’ Oh ! what will she say !  
When Rumor tells her that her child —  
Her dearest one — is so defiled.  
And home — that dearest place on earth,  
That place where love first had its birth,  
That place where father, mother meet  
Each day around the mercy seat  
That place where brother, sister plead  
For that forgiveness which all need,  
That place which all your faults conceals,  
That place which all your sorrow heals,

That place which God gave man in love,  
Sweet emblem of the Home above,—  
No more shall I behold that place,  
No more shall feel its sweet embrace.  
Alas, my grief no tongue can tell.  
God bless my home ! Dear home, farewell ! ”  
The jailor then unlocked the door  
Of this dark cell, and on the floor  
He placed a pan of water, foul,  
And said in tones most like a growl :  
“ There’s water ! Drink, as quick as flash !  
And stop that noise or get the lash ! ”  
“ I do not like, sir, to complain ;  
But will you loose my ankle chain ?  
It hurts me so I can not keep  
From crying, though I be asleep.”  
“ Enough ! I ’ll hear no more,” he said ;  
“ The curse of France is on your head.  
Complain again and you shall feel  
The cutting lash from head to heel.”  
He slammed the door and turned the key,  
Her lips still asking to be free.  
And left alone like singing bird  
Imprisoned, there was faintly heard  
A sweet, a touching, plaintive song  
Which echo scarcely could prolong :  
She seemed to see her mother’s face  
And thus she sang in her embrace :

“O Mother ! I must bid farewell,  
The end is drawing near :  
O, kiss me mother dear, and tell  
My father not to fear.

The Future seems so dark to me,  
So full of pain and woe ;  
Draw nearer, Mother ; let me see  
Your face before you go.

I saw the angels come last night  
And stand around my bed :  
I thought they took me in their flight,  
Yet here I am instead ; . . .

Sweet angels spread your snowy wings  
And come once more to me :  
Unbind these cruel iron rings  
And bear me homeward — free.

Farewell ! dear Mother, Father, Friends !  
Farewell to all I love :  
Each day my earnest prayer ascends  
That we may meet above.”

The English of success were sure  
Because they held the Maid secure,  
And they considered her alone,  
The power that shook all England’s throne ;

But power if only Deified  
Can act though not personified ;  
And so that power which hurled the lance  
At England, in behalf of France,  
Still reigned and conquered as before,  
Though its possessor fetters wore.  
Strong Compiègne, with forces vast,  
Surrendered to the French at last.  
And city, village, hamlet, town,  
In quick succession to the crown  
Of France surrendered full, complete,  
And England cursed her sad defeat.  
The English hatred now became  
So strong for Joan, that her name  
When mentioned made them rave and swear  
That greater torture she should bear.  
Hate cried for vengeance, vengeance cried :  
“ By blood will I be satisfied.”  
Three months the Maid in prison lay,  
Tormented more and more each day,  
When from the king of England’s hand  
A letter came with this command :  
Joan the Maid, by my decree,  
By Bishop of Beauvais shall be  
Examined, tried, that he may draw  
A plea of guilt by God and law.  
What could have been more base, absurd,  
Than that her trial should be heard

By one whose very heart and soul  
Was under England's full control.  
The king and bishop then decide  
That she be in the prison tried,  
Where she might not by any chance  
Escape their constant vigilance.  
They were resolved her life to take,  
Yet really had no charge to make ;  
So spies to ev'ry town were sent  
To find some charges, or invent  
Some plot which would convict the Maid,  
Though truth and justice they evade.  
The spies returned and with them brought  
These charges, which they had not sought :  
“ Truth, virtue, love for ev'ry one,  
Sweet faith in God and Christ His Son.”  
The Bishop heard the spies' report.  
“ Ye traitors of the meanest sort !  
Ye cowards ! villains ! ye deserve  
To die the death of her ye serve ! ”  
Thus he addressed them, thus displayed  
His feelings for Joan the Maid.  
An hundred judges, learned, wise,  
Her grand tribunal did comprise.  
They could examine, blame, denounce,  
But sentence they could not pronounce.  
Their presence seemed to be required  
For that display which was desired.

They hoped to thrill the Maid with fear  
By telling her she should appear  
Before these judges who so well  
Her inmost thoughts could surely tell.  
The Bishop of Beauvais had power  
To sentence her when came the hour.  
The time of trial was at hand  
As stated by the king's command.  
Outside the cell the prison hall  
Was bounded by a huge stone wall.  
The roof above shut out the light  
And made it dark as any night,  
Along these walls fierce soldiers stood  
Like beasts of prey which thirst for blood.  
An hundred benches set in rows,  
Where tired nature could repose,  
At one end of the hall were placed  
And each a judge most learned graced ;  
While in their midst upon a chair  
The Bishop sat with priestly air.  
Before his chair a slab of stone  
Served as a desk on which were thrown  
His books and papers, pen and ink,—  
Those things which help great men to think.  
Before this desk, with rapid pen  
The scribes were placed, their number ten.  
The English rabble fierce and wild  
Came in to persecute the child.

The dimly burning tapers' light  
Shone like the fireflies in the night ;  
Which only made this solemn scene  
More like that where lost souls convene.  
The hour arrives. The prison bell  
Tolls mournfully a parting knell  
As if some soul had met its doom  
Beyond the veil of mortal gloom.  
The judges, Bishop, rabble, all  
Remain in silence in the hall.  
The massive iron doors, which hung  
Upon their creaking hinges, swung  
Wide open. Ev'ry eye was strained  
To see the beast led forward chained.  
Her chains which rattled on the floor,  
As step by step she neared the door,  
Delighted this most eager throng  
More than some sweet, enchanting song.  
Joan appeared, her face was white,  
Her eyes unnaturally bright,  
Her lips were blue, her cheeks were thin,  
Her bones seemed bursting through the skin ;  
Back from her forehead full and fair  
Her bony fingers kept her hair.  
Her head was bowed, her body bent,  
Her strength, her life, were nearly spent.  
Her steps were weak, her breath was short,  
And thus they dragg'd her into court.

Her trembling steps approached, at length,  
The pris'ner's stand, and here her strength  
Seemed scarcely able to sustain  
Her heavy, dragging, cruel chain,  
And here, before the Bishop's chair,  
She kneeled in humble, silent prayer.  
At this the rabble loudly cheered  
And yelled, and hooted, scoffed, and sneered,  
And cried : " Ye witch, 't is time to pray,  
We have a debt now we will pay :  
May curses be your daily bread,  
And fires torment you, live or dead ! "

Joan arose her charge to wait,  
She had no counsel, advocate.  
" Be silent all ! " the Bishop said,  
And then he thus addressed the Maid :  
" Joan, you are accused of crime  
Against the Holy Faith sublime ;  
Also, as we regret to see,  
Of Sacrilege and Heresy.  
Young Maid, what is your age ? " he cried.  
" About nineteen, sir, " she replied.  
" What can you say of these base crimes,  
Unequaled in these Christian times ? "  
" My mother, sir, taught me to say  
The Pater Noster ev'ry day,  
The Ave also and the Creed,  
According to my daily need.

No one, except my mother dear,  
Taught me my God to worship here.”  
“ Repeat aloud the Creed and prayers,”  
He said, “ before these learnéd chairs.”  
“ O sir ! I cannot read a word,  
I only know them as I heard  
Them from my mother’s lips as she  
Taught me to pray so earnestly.  
I am afraid that some mistake  
In its hard language I might make,  
And by this ignorant display  
Something against my God might say.  
If, as confessor, you will hear  
My prayers and Creed, sir, give an ear,  
Most willingly will I recite  
Them as I say them ev’ry night.”  
“ Back to the dungeon, jailor, lead  
This Maid who knows not prayers nor Creed.”  
And bending underneath the weight  
Of iron chains, of curse and hate,  
Within her cage and cell once more  
He led her back and locked the door.  
The rabble shouted : “ Witch ! ” and howled.  
The judges shook their heads and scowled.  
The Bishop’s eyes were on the floor,  
His face a sad expression bore.  
The jailor threw a crust of bread  
Beneath the door ; but nothing said.

Alone once more her breaking heart  
Cried bitterly : " O Thou ! who art  
The Infinite, Eternal One —  
My God ! My God ! What have I done !  
That this most dreadful weight of woe  
Should crush the soul that loves Thee so !  
Have I been false ? Is my past life  
One record of a sinful strife ?  
Have I, by sin, offended Thee ?  
For this hast Thou deserted me ?  
Have I been serving Satan's will ?  
And am I serving Satan still ?  
Shall I, at last, my Voices find  
To be from my deluded mind ?  
O God ! Forbid that I should be  
Deceived by such base treachery !  
Forgive me, Father, still I pray.  
Increase my faith from day to day.  
O give me courage to appear  
Before my judges without fear !  
And grant me wisdom, power of thought  
To answer questions as I ought !  
In mercy guide me to the end !  
My dying moments, God, defend !  
Sustain me in that dreadful hour  
When flames my trembling flesh devour :  
And when the awful scene is o'er  
And men can torture me no more,

Then, Father, may my soul arise  
Triumphant to the purer skies ! ”  
But hark ! Again that voice is heard  
Repeating sweetly word for word :  
“ Be faithful, fervent, earnest, true,  
And God will keep and comfort you.”  
The next day’s sun had scarce unfurled  
His banner o’er a wintry world,  
And called from slumbers sweet and sad  
Unconscious mortals good and bad,  
When hastily the eager crowd  
With gestures wild and voices loud,  
Assembled in the hall to see  
The next act in this tragedy.  
The Bishop, judges, scribes assumed  
Their duties, and the case resumed.  
The Bishop spoke, and all were dumb :  
“ Bring forth the Maid, the hour is come.”  
Joan appeared, and sweetly smiled,  
For she was fully reconciled.  
“ Joan ! ” he said, “ upon your oath,  
Before your God and country both  
You are commanded to reveal  
The truth and nothing to conceal.”  
“ Most noble lord,” she said, and bowed  
As well as by her chains allowed,  
“ Think well of what you dare to claim  
When you charge me in His great name

To tell the truth concerning things  
Which appertain to God and kings.  
You say you are my judge — not so ;  
You are instead my greatest foe !  
Sir ! in the name of God I stand,  
I care not for man's weak command, —  
He can accuse, he can convict,  
Most dreadful pain he can inflict,  
And he my wretched life can take  
By rack or axe or burning stake ;  
But all the powers of earth combined  
Which ever mortal dared to find  
Can not destroy ; yea — harm my soul,  
Thank God ! He can not that control !  
Sir, you can ask me what you will  
My motto has been truth ; is still.  
Two things from me no man can draw,  
By any threat, by any law :  
The secrets of my God above  
And of my king whose throne I love.”  
The rabble yelled : “ Give her the rack !  
A hundred stripes upon the back ! ”  
The judges from their seats arose  
And calmed their fury to repose.  
The Bishop simply said : “ Beware !  
Defy not ; though you think you dare.”  
He then went on : “ Do you still hear  
Your Voices as the saints appear ? ”

“I do,” she said ; “they came last night,  
And when they came all seemed so bright.”

“And did they tell you not to fear  
That they would save though death were near ?”

“To that I will not, sir, reply.  
If you would know, ask Him on high.”

“Well, are you in a state of Grace ?”  
The Bishop asked with solemn face.

“If not,” she said, “O God, I pray !  
Receive me into Grace this day !

But if I am it is my prayer  
That Thou wilt keep me safely there.”

“Who are these saints whom you have seen  
So often round your bed convene ?”

“The name St. Margaret one bore,  
Saint Catherine another wore.

Saint Michael was the third and last —  
God grant my lot with them is cast !”

“What did these blessed saints reveal  
Before whom you were wont to kneel ?”

“I tell you plainly, sir, again ;  
What spirits know is hid from men.

Their message did the king concern  
And what it was you can not learn !”

“Well, were these saints, by you revered,  
In nakedness when they appeared ?”

“Think you that God who clothes the flow’rs  
In beauty far beyond man’s powers,

Who clothes the fields, the trees with care,  
Who clothes the songsters of the air,  
Who clothes the brute with glossy coats,  
Who clothes the fish that sinks or floats,  
Who clothes the serpent's winding form,  
Who clothes the low, despiséd worm,  
Who clothes the insects as they need,  
Who clothes man gorgeously indeed,—  
Think you that poverty has made  
My God so poor that He needs aid  
To clothe the Saints as He desires  
Regardless of what man requires?"  
The Bishop struck the desk a blow—  
"No speeches, Maid ; say yes or no !  
What evidences did you bring  
That would convince your crownless king  
That your great mission was Divine ?  
Did he not ask you for a sign?"  
"Ask of the sun that lights the sky,  
Ask of the moon the sun's ally,  
Ask of the stars that tell no tales,  
Ask of the breezes or the gales,  
Ask of the fleecy clouds that sail  
According as the winds prevail,  
Ask of the birds when they appear,  
Ask of God, if you do not fear,  
Ask of the winds from off the sea.  
Ask of them all, sir,—not of me.

For as I told you twice before,  
I will not say ; ask me no more.”  
Cries of “ Burn her ! ” came from the hall.  
The Bishop cried : “ Be silent all ! ”  
“ Did not your Voices, Maid, predict  
Escape from death though we convict ? ”  
“ That question, sir, has nought to do  
With anything that concerns you.  
But there is One and only One  
Who knows the end. His will be done ! ”  
“ Were you not asked to lay aside  
Your warlike dress, your martial pride,  
And to assume the modest dress  
Of graceful woman weaponless ? ”  
“ I was, sir, almost ev’ry day :  
But not by Him whom I obey.”  
“ What can you say of all your dead ?  
Of all the blood which you have shed ?  
Of all the pain, of all the woe  
Which you have caused with each death-blow ? ”  
“ Sir, in the name of Him I fear,  
Before whom I may soon appear,  
I do most solemnly declare,  
That my bright swords no blood stains bear.  
I led the army to save France ”—  
“ Kill her ! kill her ! and with her lance ! ”  
The rabble shouted. “ Let her feel  
The cutting pain of pointed steel ! ”

“ Silence ! I say ; ” the Bishop cried,  
“ And let the Maid be justified.”  
“ Amid the battle’s awful roar,  
Its victims drenched with their own gore,  
Why looked you, Maid, upon your ring  
As though it were some magic thing ? ”  
“ My ring the name of Jesus bears,  
That name which lightens all my cares.  
Around it, sir, there are entwined  
The sweetest memories of mind ;  
My mother gave it me and said :  
‘ Take this, and after I am dead,  
Think of your mother, whose last breath  
Taught you of Jesus and of death.’  
It takes me back to childhood’s days,  
It brings up all my childish plays,  
It shows my father’s fond embrace  
As I looked up into his face  
And asked him who God was, and why  
He let my little playmate die.  
It shows me childhood’s happiness,  
It shows me home’s sweet blessedness,  
O sir ! that ring is more to me  
Than all the wealth of land and sea.”  
“ Why did you leave your home to fight  
For one who rules, but not by right ? ”  
The Bishop sternly asked of her.  
“ Because I was commanded, sir.”

“ And did you not, Maid, disobey  
Your parents, when you ran away  
From home and friends, to undertake  
The yoke of England’s king to break ? ”  
“ I did, sir, as I fully know ;  
For God commanded me to go.”  
She was remanded to her cell  
To reappear at morning’s bell.  
The next day, promptly on the hour,  
The bell from its dark, prison tower,  
With deep, reverberating sound  
That filled the hills and vales around,  
In solemn measures called once more  
The rabble to the court-room door.  
The Bishop, judges, came to fill  
Their places and then all was still.  
Joan appeared with smiling face,  
And bowing, kneeling, took her place.  
The Bishop, with his priestly air,  
Addressed the Maid with nicest care :  
“ Will you allow the Holy Church  
Your deeds and actions, Maid, to search ? ”  
(She knew the Church was also sold  
To England for its price in gold),  
And lifting up her youthful head :  
“ God is my Judge ! ” was all she said.  
“ Do you refuse, then, to permit  
The Church to do as it sees fit ? ”

“God is my Judge !” she said no more ;  
Her face determination bore.

“And do you not, then, understand  
That our great Church has full command ?”

“God is my Judge ! I do His will !”  
She said no more, her lips were still.

“Do you ignore your judges, then ?”

“God is my Judge !” she said again.

“But by the gods ! do you not know  
That we can order your death-blow ?”

“God is my Judge !” No more, no less.  
She seemed in perfect peacefulness.

“Ah ! shall I put you to the rack ?  
Command the lash upon your back ?  
Shall I commit you to the stake,  
And let you there confession make ?”

“God is my Judge !” she seemed as glad  
And undisturbed as he was mad.

The rabble gave an awful yell :

“Send her into the fires of Hell !  
With red-hot steel burn out her eyes !  
Cut out the cursed tongue that lies !”

“God is my Judge ! God will defend,  
Though you torment me to the end !”  
The judges knew not what to say,  
But rising, calmed the fierce display.  
The Bishop, when he had assumed  
His dignity, the case resumed.

" Will you submit," he said, with hope,  
" To him our Holy Father, Pope?"

" Conduct me to the Pope, and I  
Myself to him will justify.

What God, sir, has revealed to me,  
Nor pope, nor bishop, nor decree,  
Nor powers of earth can now compel  
My trembling lips and tongue to tell."

" Maid, he who dares to break his vow  
And spurn the Church, as you do now,  
Is called a heretic direct,

The burning stake he must expect."

" Although I should behold the flame  
With fiery tongues around my frame,  
I would not now reveal one word,  
Sir, more or less than you have heard."

" Would you allow to interfere  
The Gen'ral Council, were that here?"

" What is that council, sir?" she cried.

A monk — Isambard — then replied :

" It is a council, Maid, composed  
Of men allied, of men opposed.

They hear the case and then decide  
According as the laws provide."

The Bishop rose, his hands he wrung,

" By God!" he said, " monk, hold your tongue!"

The Maid looked earnestly at both,

And blushed to hear the Bishop's oath.

Then said : " You shall not hear one word,  
Sir, more or less than you have heard."

" Then will we put you to the rack  
Till all your bones and sinews crack."

" Sir, tear me limb from limb," she said .

" Tear my frail body from my head !

Give me the lash ! give me the flame !

Give me the pain Hell would not claim !

Burn out my eyes with red-hot steel !

Cut out my tongue ! my blood congeal !

Tear out my beating heart, and see

It quiver in its agony !

I swear before my God above !

Whom I adore, I worship, love,

Before you who my life has cursed,

To say no more, sir ; do your worst ! "

The hall was filled with great uproar.

The rabble yelled, and cursed, and swore,

They gnashed their teeth, they clutched their hands,

" Choke the false witch !" were their demands.

The judges threw their arms about

With unbecoming, angry shout,

They shook their heads, and left their seats,

And rushed out madly to the streets.

The soldiers thrust their swords at her

And cried : " Accurséd murderer !

Chain her fast to the nearest stone

And let the crows pick ev'ry bone ! "

The Bishop's voice was heard o'er all,  
Commanding silence in the hall :  
“ Into her dungeon, jailor, throw  
This most degraded child of woe.  
Let Famine feed her, darkness cheer,  
And inch by inch let Death appear ! ”  
The jailor seized her by the wrist,  
And giving it the prison twist,  
“ Come on ! ” he said. She screamed with pain.  
And lifting up her heavy chain,  
“ O sir ! please do not hurt me so ! ”  
She said, “ I will, sir, I will go.”  
As step by step she walked along,  
The rabble burst forth with a song :

“ Joan ! Joan !  
The pride of France,  
Where is your sword ?  
Where is your lance ?  
Why don't you pray ?  
Why don't you sing ?  
Why don't you praise  
Your bastard king ?  
Why don't you call  
Your voices down  
To help you fight  
Old England's crown !  
What will we do ?  
What will we do ?

To entertain  
And tickle you ?  
Burn out your eyes !  
Cut off your ears !  
Cut out your tongue !  
With knife or shears !  
Peel off your skin  
And let the crows  
Pick off your flesh  
With beaks and toes !  
And hang your bones  
Upon a tree  
For all to see,  
For all to see ;  
We all agree,  
To hang your bones  
Upon a tree  
For all to see."

Thus ended this disgraceful act  
In that dark tragedy of fact.  
Her testimony, word for word,  
Had been recorded, and referred  
To that assembly called by name  
The Inquisition, to its shame ;  
For this assembly had been sold  
To England, and was thus controlled.  
This false tribunal, when it learned  
The facts, this verdict soon returned :

“ Ye Bishop, Judges, hear ! O hear  
Our verdicts as they do appear !  
Joan is found, we much lament,  
To be the Devil’s Instrument !  
Undutiful in high degree  
To her devoted family !  
And thirsting for the blood, the life,  
Of those most faithful in the strife !”  
The lawyers whom they deigned to call  
Declared her innocent of all.  
Joan was dragged, sick, from her cell  
That public torture might compel  
Her strong, resisting soul to make  
Confession at the burning stake.  
Two scaffolds in a churchyard built,  
Served as the place to test her guilt.  
Behind the church this graveyard lay,  
A picture of slow, sad decay :  
The graves and mossy slabs were old,  
The quaint inscriptions scarcely told  
The birth and death of those whose bones  
Lay crumbling underneath the stones.  
The head-stones stood in many ways  
And bore the marks of ancient days.  
Some hewn from granite stood upright,  
And some of softer make, though white,  
Stood leaning, as if half inclined  
To fall upon the graves behind ;

And some were broken ; others lay  
Full length upon the lifeless clay ;  
And in their midst was one old tomb,  
Where darkness, dampness, silence, gloom,  
Supremely reigned and seemed to say :  
“ Disturb me not till Judgment Day.”  
A few old trees, with branches bare,  
Stood sighing in the solemn air,  
And moss and vine in silent strife  
Upon their lifeless trunks found life.  
With stones and bones the ground was strewn,  
The flowers had gone, the birds had flown :  
The soil was cold, the grass was dead,  
All life, save moss and vine, had fled.  
The scaffolds were prepared with care,  
In honor of the grand affair.  
The Cardinal, the Bishop, Priest,  
As if invited to a feast,  
And judges, doctors, all allied,  
The larger scaffold occupied.  
The other, built of stone and wood,  
Near by and facing this one stood.  
The church bell from its lonely tower  
Tolled solemnly the passing hour ;  
The sun was veiled by passing cloud  
And o'er the churchyard threw a shroud ;  
A solemn, mournful wind arose,  
As if the dead could not repose ;

And then the sound of tramping feet  
Came from the long and narrow street ;  
The churchyard gate swung open wide,  
An officer appeared as guide.  
Great multitudes of men appeared,  
And as they saw the scaffolds cheered.  
The old, the young, the blind, the lame,  
With sticks and clubs as weapons, came,  
The air was full of shout and song,  
Which came from this disgraceful throng ;  
They beat the gravestones with their sticks,  
And danced and yelled like lunatics.  
Then, suddenly, the shouts increased :  
“ Here comes the Witch ! Prepare the feast ! ”  
They swung their clubs, they clawed the air,  
They beat their breasts, and tore their hair :  
“ Accurséd Witch ! begin your prayer,  
Call down your Voices from the air,  
We ’ll tear your very heartstrings out !  
Down on your knees and be devout !  
Ho ! Brothers, sing :  
O Maid ! O Maid !  
What will we do  
To entertain  
And tickle you ?  
Burn out your eyes !  
Cut off your ears !  
Cut out your tongue

With knife or shears !  
Peel off your skin  
And let the crows  
Pick off your flesh  
With beaks and toes !  
And hang your bones  
Upon a tree  
For all to see !  
For all to see !  
We all agree  
To hang your bones  
Upon a tree  
For all to see ! ”

Joan appeared with shrunken face,  
With glassy eyes, with easy grace,  
With quiv’ring lips, with puny hands  
Together bound by iron bands,  
With massive chains around her waist,  
With fetters on her ankles placed.  
They bore her to the scaffold which  
Was thus inscribed : JOAN THE WITCH.  
They chained her firmly to the stake,  
And left her there her peace to make.  
She stood alone, she shook with fears,  
Her head was bowed, her eyes in tears,  
Her glossy, long, disheveled hair  
Waved beautifully in the air ;

She sighed, she sobbed, she groaned, she wept,  
And utter silence then she kept.  
And thus she stood ; but nothing said,  
Until at last she raised her head :  
“ Have mercy, God ! ” she said no more,  
Her agony in silence bore.  
The Bishop, at this dreadful sight,  
Sat motionless ; his face was white,  
He trembled, shook and tried to speak,  
His voice was broken, trembling, weak.  
The executioner appears,  
The Bishop melted into tears.  
The rabble solemn silence kept,  
And some who came to kill her wept.  
And as she stood in silence there,  
So innocent, so pure and fair,  
So like an angel from the skies,  
They turned away their weeping eyes.  
Hate changed to pity. Pity cried :  
“ Oh ! let the Maid be justified ! ”  
There are times when the basest mind  
Feels sorrow keenly and is kind.  
A Preacher then tried to persuade  
Joan to yield and death evade ;  
And thinking to compel her now  
Her king and France to disavow,  
In words which seemed for her defence  
He spoke with solemn eloquence :

“ Alas ! thou noble House of France ! ”  
He said, and cast a with’ring glance,  
“ How hast thou fallen so from grace  
As to acknowledge one so base ?  
Why hast thou promised to obey  
A king, a heretic, this day ?  
Yes, Joan, ’t is to thee I swear  
Charles is a heretic — beware ! ”  
Joan, though shamefully abused,  
Spoke not till he her king accused ;  
Then, interrupting him, replied  
With voice defiant, dignified :  
“ Although in flames, sir, I am cast,  
Sir, though this moment be my last,  
Sir, though my God the veil withdraws,  
Sir, though I hear Hell’s gnashing jaws,  
I swear, here, as I only can,  
That my king is a Christian man ;  
The church he loves, with it complies,  
Who calls him Heretic, sir, lies ! ”  
“ O, stop her mouth ! ” the Bishop cried ;  
“ Let not her tongue be gratified ! ”  
A recantation then he read  
In which he offered her instead  
Of death, imprisonment for life.  
The Bishop’s conscience was at strife.  
He urged her quickly to comply  
With this, nor gave the reason why.

And many by remorse attacked  
Entreated her to sign the act,  
Which only asked her to confess  
Her ignorance — no more — no less.  
She stood a moment lost in thought,  
Then said : “ I will ; let it be brought ! ”  
The notary gave her a pen  
To sign the act that saved her, when  
She blushed, she smiled, she hung her head ;  
“ I can not read or write,” she said.  
With his assistance then she traced  
A circle, and within it placed  
A cross, which signified her name,  
And rescued her from rack or flame.  
Her pen had scarcely left the page—  
The mob burst forth with awful rage.  
Revenge had kindled such a fire  
That nothing but her fun’ral pyre.  
Could satisfy the mad demands  
Which they now threatened with their hands.  
Around the Bishop’s stand the crowd  
With swinging clubs, and curses loud,  
Assembled to demand the life  
Of her by rack, or stake, or knife.  
And thus the mob with fiery eyes,  
Its awful anger gratifies.  
Some hurl upon the stand their sticks ;  
Some hurl their clubs, some knives, some bricks ;

Some hurl the broken, old gravestones,  
Some hurl the dead men's whitened bones.  
They cried : " Ye miserable priests !  
Ye coward judges ! villains ! beasts !  
This day your king ye have betrayed !  
This day thus shall ye be repaid ! "  
The Bishop to escape the blows  
Excited, frightened, quickly rose  
And said : " O men ! allay your thirst !  
Her sentence soon shall be reversed ! "  
Controlled by no enacted laws  
Their anger now turned to applause.  
They cheered the Bishop, danced, and sang,  
The very air with praises rang.

The Maid stood weeping at the stake.  
She raised her eyes and thus she spake :  
" Have mercy, Father ! It is done.  
Forsake me not through Christ Thy Son ! "  
Back to her cell they bore her then  
Amid the scoffs and sneers of men ;  
There to await the final day  
When God would take her soul away.  
The Bishop saw that she must die  
His party's hate to satisfy ;  
And so the burning stake he chose  
The awful tragedy to close.  
The smiling month of May had come.  
The air was filled with busy hum

Of bees, that sought the sweetest flow'rs  
That grew in Nature's lovely bow'rs.  
The birds returned — a happy throng —  
To cheer the hills and vales with song.  
The sweet Spring showers, the bright warm sun,  
Their work of mystery had done.  
The grass was green, the skies were blue,  
The air was clear, the clouds were few.  
The playful lambs skipped o'er the hills  
And sought the cooling, shady rills.  
The sleepy cows, at close of day,  
Lay down and watched their young ones play.  
The gently breathing Summer's breeze  
Played softly in the leafy trees.  
The sunlight, and the sparkling dew,  
Each morn the buds and flow'rs renew ;  
While evening lulled them all to sleep  
And set the stars a watch to keep.  
All Nature had received new birth.  
The resurrection type of Earth.  
The year's bright morn was almost passed :  
For Spring was breathing now her last.  
A few hours more and all would be  
Recorded in her history.  
Her hot successor's sultry breath  
Poured in to hasten on her death.  
O Spring ! thy fairest, sweetest hours  
Must go and leave behind the flow'rs.

But hold ! Another morn must go —  
A morn of life, a morn of woe.  
Wait, gentle Spring ! In kindness wait !  
For Death will furnish thee a mate, —  
That mate, as sweet as thou art mild,  
Is Joan of Arc, the Maid, the child.  
Spring looked around, her beauty saw  
And sighed at Nature's cruel law.  
It was the eve before her death  
That Joan sat, with sobbing breath,  
Within her dungeon-cell so dark  
Communing with her God ; and hark !  
A robin perched upon a tree  
Was pouring forth sad melody.  
And through the massive walls of stone  
She could just hear the robin's moan.  
As if some one had robbed her nest  
The bird its saddest notes expressed.  
Joan sat with attentive ear  
And tried its plaintive song to hear.  
“ Sweet bird,” she said, “ for thee I feel.  
Would that thy sorrow I could heal !  
God made thee to be gay and free  
Why dost thou show such misery ?  
Has some one robbed thee of a home  
And left thee in strange fields to roam ?  
Thy young has some one from thee torn  
And left thee all alone to mourn ?

Art thou without a mate to sing  
The early morning-song of Spring?  
Alas ! dear creature, be not sad !  
For thou art good ! Thou cans't be bad !  
Nor sin can thy sweet soul compel  
To love high Heav'n, or fear dark Hell.  
I'd give the world if I could be  
As free from sin as thou art free !  
Sweet bird, to-morrow when you sing,  
Your sweet companions with you bring !  
And sing your brightest, sweetest lay  
And drive my sorrow all away.  
Come, pretty birds, and sing to me  
To-morrow evening from the tree !  
But no ! To-morrow I must die.  
Sweet bird, good-bye ! A sweet good-bye !  
Sweet music I shall hear no more  
Until upon that brighter shore  
I stand, and hear the angels sing :  
Praise God the Father ! God the King !”  
The robin ceased and took its flight.  
“Sweet bird,” she said, “good-night ! good-night !”  
There was a pause, a silent spell  
And then she said her last Farewell :  
“My Country and my Country's king !  
Let Angels of your praises sing !  
Ye rocks and streams of France — Farewell !  
Ye sunny hills and vales — Farewell !

Ye sun and moon ! Ye stars of night !  
Ye fleecy clouds ! Ye skies so bright !  
Ye happy flocks ! Ye grazing herds !  
Ye pretty flow'rs ! Ye singing birds !  
Ye pastures green ! Ye waters sweet !  
Ye shady woods where sylvans meet !  
Ye grottoes, lakes, and secret dell !  
I loved you all ! alas ! Farewell !  
O King ! whose noble Christian name  
Adorns a brighter page than Fame,  
For thee I fought ! For thee I die !  
O King ! most noble King, good-bye !  
Ye sons of France ! Ye daughters fair !  
Ye churches calling men to prayer !  
Ye brave, ye loyal, valiant men !  
We part and shall not meet again !  
God grant that bloody war may cease !  
God grant you everlasting peace !  
God bless you ! Keep you ! With you dwell !  
Belovéd France and King — Farewell !”  
Then sobbing, sleep o'erheard her cries  
And for the last time closed her eyes.  
The day of execution came —  
That day of horror, day of shame.  
The solemn, doleful prison bell  
In earnest tolled a parting knell.  
Joan attired in woman's dress  
Left the dark cell with cheerfulness.

They placed her on the fatal cart  
Prepared to feel death's cruel dart,  
Beside her, her confessor rode  
To do the duty which he owed.  
The monk Isambard, tender, kind,  
With measured footsteps walked behind.  
No one was there whom she preferred,  
No one to speak a loving word,  
No one to drive away the tear,  
No one to say : "Be of good cheer."  
No one her final hour to bless,  
No one to kiss her or caress,  
No one to draw a parting sigh  
No one to say a sweet good-bye.  
At last she reached the journey's end  
She saw the stake that was to send  
Her pure, her innocent, sweet soul  
Beyond the reach of man's control.  
The Bishop, judges, mob she saw  
Assembled to defy all law.  
She was about to leave the cart —  
The preacher said : "In peace depart !  
The church can do no more — good-bye !"  
She was alone, alone to die.  
She knelt : she clasped her hands, and there  
Poured forth her final earthly prayer :  
" Into thy hands, O God, I come,  
So sinful, weak, so burdensome.

Receive me, Father, if thou wilt  
And wash away my sin and guilt !  
O, grant me Thy preserving pow'r,  
Protect me at this awful hour !  
And when my eyelids close in death,  
And when I draw my dying breath,  
And when my beating heart shall cease,  
O, grant me everlasting peace !  
Dear Father ! those by whom I die,  
Forgive them all ! all sanctify !  
And as Death takes them one by one,  
Oh ! may they hear from Thee : ‘Well done !’  
My country, Father, still defend !  
And to its king such wisdom send  
That Peace, Prosperity, and Love  
May reign till all are saved above.  
Farewell to all ! I say again,  
Farewell, forevermore. Amen !”  
She then arose and took her place  
Upon the scaffold, death to face.  
They chained her to the stake and fled.  
“Can I not have a cross ?” she said ;  
No one this last request would heed :  
But hissed her. Oh ! accurséd deed !  
At last one Christian act was done.  
A man, of dry twigs, made her one ;  
“O, thank you kindly, sir,” she said,  
As tears of gratitude she shed.

She kissed the cross, she raised her head :  
“ I am prepared to die ! ” she said.  
The spark was struck, the crackling flame  
Up from the fagots fiercely came.  
Upon the multitude she gazed,  
Her hands to Heaven then she raised :  
“ O Rouen ! ‘T is my dying breath,  
Thou shalt atone for this — my death ! ”  
The Bishop hearing her drew near  
His face as white as death with fear.  
“ Bishop,” she said, “ through you I die.  
God bless you, sir ! Good-bye ! good-bye.”  
For one short moment all was still,  
And tears the rabble’s eyes would fill.  
But hush ! a cry of deep despair !  
The flames have caught her dress and hair,  
“ Water ! water ! ” her instinct cried.  
“ Mother ! Mother ! ” no voice replied.  
Her head fell forward on her breast,  
“ Jesus ! ” she sighed and was at rest.  
A moment passed and all was o’er,  
Joan of Arc was now no more.  
They threw her ashes in the Seine,  
That trace of her might not remain.  
Into that world of endless bliss  
Beyond death’s dreadful, dark abyss,  
Beyond the torture and despair  
Of mortal persecution, there

To meet the blessed saints of Him  
The Prince of Seraphs, Cherubim,  
To enter that abode of peace  
Where sorrow, woe, forever cease,  
And with the choruses to sing :  
“Praise God the Father, God the King !”  
The noblest soul of France had fled  
In splendid triumph o'er the dead.  
Deep on her stone should be engraved :  
“For France she died, but France she saved.”

29✓







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